

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR 2015

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MILITARY

WITNESSES

**SERGEANT MAJOR RAYMOND F. CHANDLER, III, UNITED STATES
ARMY**

**MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MICHAEL D. STEVENS, UNITED
STATES NAVY**

**SERGEANT MAJOR MICHAEL P. BARRETT, UNITED STATES MARINE
CORPS**

**CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JAMES A. CODY, UNITED STATES AIR
FORCE**

CHAIRMAN CULBERSON OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. CULBERSON. Good morning. I want to welcome everyone here to today's hearing on military quality of life for our servicemembers. Really one of the most important things that we do is to ensure the peace of mind of our men and women in uniform. It is an extraordinary privilege for me to serve as chairman of this Committee, but I really feel like a Co-Chairman because this Committee is—there are no party labels or distinctions; we are all here on behalf of our constituents to do everything we can to support our men and women in uniform.

What a privilege it is for me to serve with our Co-Chairman, Sanford Bishop, and the work that he has done over the years on this subcommittee has been a great asset to me, as I still sort of feel like the new kid on the block here, with this immense responsibility we have to look after the men and women in uniform.

And, Sanford, you have been a great role model to me and a great, tremendous help as we have worked together over the last several years on this Committee.

Delighted to have David Price of North Carolina working with us, as well, with his experience and knowledge of the issues that involve quality of life for our military.

I also want to welcome our new members of the subcommittee: Congressman David Valadao of California, and Congresswoman Martha Roby of Alabama. Congressman Valadao represents the 21st district of California, an agricultural area, and we are looking forward to helping him do everything we can to make sure they get plenty of water in his part of the country.

So we know how vital that is to the economy in your area, and also vital to the rest of us in the country when we go shopping.

And we are delighted to—also want to make sure I recognize that Congressman Valadao—his district includes the Naval Air Station Lemoore, with 48 aviation tenants, which include the Strike Fighter Weapons School for the Pacific, and F-18 Hornets and Super Hornets.

Martha Roby, I have always been a big fan of her, and she represents the state of Alabama. She is an attorney, as I am, which is a good and a bad thing. And I know it rewires your brain; it also is a tremendous asset as you read some of these incomprehensible federal statutes.

And she is also a former city councilman. And her district is known for its defense facilities and military installations, which include Maxwell Air Force Base, Fort Rucker, and Gunter Annex.

So you have got a whole—all of us on the Committee devoted to you, to the men and women that you represent, and by opinion, we have got immense responsibilities in this subcommittee, but I can think of nothing more important that we do than to ensure the peace of mind, the quality of life of our men and women in uniform so they never have to look over their shoulder, never have to worry for one nanosecond about the quality of their housing, the quality of the facilities, the quality of their equipment. Everything that they need we will, in our subcommittee, do our very best to ensure that they have it, and to do so arm in arm.

It is a real privilege for me to recognize my good friend, Sanford Bishop of Georgia, for his opening remarks.

MR. BISHOP OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and it has been a pleasure to work with you on this subcommittee because, as you indicated, we do have some very important work to do.

I will keep my remarks very short so that we can proceed directly to the witnesses. We have a very distinguished panel, and I always look forward to this hearing because these individuals always give us the best picture of what is happening to our men and women on the front lines.

We talk a lot about facilities, equipment, force structure, and strategy, but it is the men and women like the ones sitting in front of us who really make our military what it is today. I truly believe that our servicemembers and the support of the family—that the family members make to our military is great, and it is our responsibility to make sure that they are taken care of.

That is exactly why I started the Congressional Military Family Caucus, so we can better address the issues that you will be raising today with us.

I want to make sure we are doing enough to help our servicemembers and their families because the last thing that they need is to worry about what is happening back home while they are deployed and need to be focused on the mission. In all of your testimonies you raise many of the issues that confront your services, such as family services, recruiting, retention, and transition, so I want you to use this as an opportunity to tell us what we have gotten right or what we need to improve on in order to ease the burden that is placed on our servicemembers and their families.

Thank you for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back and I look forward to the testimony.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Sanford.

I am privileged to have—we are all privileged to have with us today Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler, III, who is a returning witness, and we regret this will be the last time you will testify before the Committee, but we thank you so very much for your dedicated 33 years of service to the United States of America in the United States Army.

You were sworn in as Sergeant Major of the Army on March 1st of 2011 but you have served this country in all tank crewman positions; you have had multiple tours as a troop squadron and regimental master gunner and it has been an extraordinary privilege for me to get the chance to—all of us to work with you as the Sergeant Major of the Army, and we are honored and privileged to have you here and thank you for your service.

We are also privileged to have with us today Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Michael D. Stevens.

Delighted to have you with us here this year, sir. And this is the first time for you here with us. I want to make sure the Committee has noted that you are the 13th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and were appointed on September 28th of 2012, after 31 years of service in the United States Navy. You came in straight from high school, I see, in 1983 and served as a wing commander, Master Chief for the largest helicopter wing in the U.S. Navy, and most recently served as the 16th Fleet Master Chief for U.S. Fleet Forces Command. And we are just really delighted to have you here with us, sir, and looking forward to hearing your testimony.

Also want to welcome to the hearing today Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal Barrett and to point out that Sergeant Major Barrett is a returning witness, and also this will be the last time you will be here.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. CULBERSON. I want to thank you for your service to the nation in the United States Marine Corps, and what a privilege it has been for us to be able to help you and the men and women under your command ensure their quality of life.

Because again, as Mr. Bishop said, this truly is, I think my favorite hearing, as well, because there is nothing more important than ensuring the quality of life for our men and women in uniform, and then of course, when we get into the V.A. sections of the hearings, as well, to make sure that when they transition into private life that the V.A. is taking good care of them.

Mr. CULBERSON. We want to make sure you all are in good hands. We want to make sure you are in good hands.

I want to make sure to note you have had 33 years of service, Sergeant Major Barrett, and enlisted in March of 1981 and are the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. You served as an infantry instructor, served in the Gulf War with Task Force Papa Bear, completed two combat deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq, and deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in March 2010—and became the first—the NATO regional commander for the Southwest Command and Command Sergeant for Nimruz and Helmand provinces in Afghanistan,

and we deeply appreciate your service to the United States of America and the Marine Corps, sir.

I want to also be sure to welcome today Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, James Cody.

We are delighted to have you here with us today, sir. You are a returning witness, of course, and were appointed in January 2013 as the 17th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force after 30 years of service, entering the Air Force in 1984. I note that your background includes a variety of duties in air traffic control at the unit and major command levels and have served overseas in Germany, South Korea, Turkey, and deployed in Operation Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom, at the tip of the spear always, and we deeply appreciate your service to the country and the United States Air Force.

We want to thank all of you for taking the time to be here. Of course, without—if I could, without objection, have your written statements entered into the record in their entirety and welcome you to summarize your remarks, if we could, in about 5 minutes apiece. And I will do my best to do the same on our end.

But before we begin questions, if I could, just as this is our first hearing, just want to remind members we will operate under rules—we will begin the hearings on time, and for those members who are present in the room when I gavel in the beginning of the hearings, I will recognize you for questions in order of seniority, alternating between majority and minority. And for those of you who arrive after the hearing has started, I will recognize you in order of arrival, alternating between majority and minority.

And we will stick to this order throughout all rounds of questioning, and I will do my very best to—I would just encourage members to stick to the 5-minute rule. I don't want to be too hard and fast with 5 minutes on the nose for members, because I think it is important for folks to get their questions out, but as best we can, members, let's try to stick to 5 minutes.

I am delighted to have each and every one of you here with us today, and I would, if I could, like to begin with the Sergeant Major of the Army, Sergeant Major Chandler.

Thank you very much, sir, for being here with us today, and look forward to your testimony.

SERGEANT MAJOR CHANDLER OPENING STATEMENT

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to speak to you. As stated, I am retiring early next year so this will likely be my last opportunity to appear before you. Representing the Army that I love has been a humbling experience, and I appreciate the support that this committee has given to our soldiers over the last 13 years.

This past year has brought some significant changes to the Army, including the impacts of sequestration, the government shutdown, furloughs, and the effects of a drawdown and budget reductions. And as always, your Army, our Army, has risen to the challenge.

In its 13th year of our nation's longest war, nearly 40,000 soldiers are still in Afghanistan, and right now it is after 8 p.m. in Afghanistan, and there are soldiers who are working with our Afghan partners conducting combat operations. They probably don't even know that this hearing is taking place right now, and that is actually a good thing.

Their focus—and rightly so—is helping the Afghans get better so that we can leave at the end of this year. We have done tremendous work in Afghanistan, and I am extremely proud of every one of our soldiers and families.

An additional 120,000 soldiers are forward-stationed or deployed in nearly 150 countries around the world. More than 1.6 million soldiers have deployed since 9/11, and many have deployed multiple times. And finally, more than 5,000 men and women in our Army have given their lives on behalf of our nation. This service and sacrifice can never be forgotten.

The Army stands at a pivotal moment, due to the daunting fiscal challenges and strategic uncertainty. But even in the midst of these challenges our mission has not changed: to prevent conflict, shape the environment, and, when necessary, fight and win our nation's wars.

As General Odierno has recently stated, it is essential that our total force—active, Guard, and Reserve—be ready to accomplish the range of military operations we are directed to perform, but we must also have a range of capabilities postured in the proper components in order to have the right force mix both now and into the future.

We have the best Army in the world. We are the best equipped, trained, and led. And although we may get leaner, we will still be the best Army tomorrow, in 5 years, and in 10 years, and as long as this nation needs an Army.

The last 13 years have been tough on our soldiers and families. We have created the Army Ready and Resilient Campaign, which delivers help to our soldiers and families. By putting nearly 100 Army programs under one umbrella, we have created a holistic, collaborative, and coherent enterprise to increase individual and unit readiness and resilience.

It also provides support to address issues such as sexual assault and suicide, and our efforts in these two areas over the past year are making positive changes in organizational climate and leader accountability. We are fully committed to the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act, through our Army Career and Alumni Program, and we understand our duty to treat those soldiers and families who are not staying in the service to be treated with dignity and respect and an orderly transition.

In partnership with the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs we conduct assistance training and transition counseling for soldiers beginning no later than 12 months from their departure from the service. We seek to return them to college or employment or to become an entrepreneur.

The Army Soldier for Life Program, which we have established, is designed to enable soldiers, veterans, and families to leave the military service career ready and connect to an established network to find employment, education, and health resources.

And we have also made vast improvement within the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. In fiscal year 2013 we had made enough progress to eliminate backlogs for most soldiers who are undergoing a medical evaluation board. We are meeting timeliness goals for all stages we control and we continue to work with the V.A. to ensure that our soldiers transition in a timely manner.

To address readiness issues, our Army has accelerated the timeline to draw down our active duty force while we reduce our budget, even while still engaged in combat operations, which is unprecedented in our history.

And to address the needs of those in our smaller and leaner force. I believe our Army's top issue is soldier readiness. The best thing that we can do for a soldier is to ensure they are prepared and ready to answer the nation's call. As I stated last year, it is critically important for an Army with less manpower and a smaller budget to retain peak readiness.

Let me close by saying that as the sergeant major of the Army the best part of my job is to visit our soldiers, families, and civilians around the world. The professionalism, dedication, and sacrifice they display every day is the reason our Army is the very envy of the world.

I leave the Army knowing that we are in great hands, our future assured because of the brave young men and women who still come forward today and into the future saying, "Send me. I will defend the American people and our way of life."

Thank you for what you do. I appreciate this vital opportunity to speak with you today, and I look forward to your questions. Army strong.

Thank you very much.

[The information follows:]



Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III

Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III was sworn in as the 14th Sergeant Major of the Army on March 1, 2011. SMA Chandler has held a variety of leadership positions throughout his career ranging from tank crewman to command sergeant major.

As Sergeant Major of the Army, Chandler serves as the Army Chief of Staff's personal adviser on all enlisted-related matters, particularly in areas affecting Soldier training and quality of life. He devotes the majority of his time to traveling throughout the Army observing training, and talking to Soldiers and their Families.

He sits on a wide variety of councils and boards that make decisions affecting enlisted Soldiers and their Families and is routinely invited to testify before Congress. Chandler was born in Whittier, California and entered the Army in Brockton, Massachusetts in September 1981. He attended One Station Unit Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky and graduated as a 19E Armor Crewman.

Chandler has served in all tank crewman positions and has had multiple tours as a troop, squadron and regimental master gunner. He has served in the 1st Infantry Division (FWD), 2d Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 3d Armor Division, 2d ACR, 3d ACR, U.S. Army Armor School, and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He also served as a 1SG in four different detachments, troops and companies. As a Sergeant Major, he served as Operations SGM in 1/2 ACR and as CSM in 1/7 Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (OIF II 2004-2005), United States Army Garrison Fort Leavenworth, KS and the United States Army Armor School CSM. Chandler was assigned as the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy CSM in December 2007. In June 2009, Chandler became the 19th Commandant of USASMA and the first enlisted commandant in USASMA history.

Chandler's military and civilian education includes all levels of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, M60A3 and M1/M1A1 Tank Master Gunner Course, Battle Staff NCO Course, First Sergeant Course, Basic Instructor Training, Total Army Instructor Trainer Course, Small Group Instructor Trainer Course, Video Tele-Training Instructor Trainer Course, Army Management Staff Course, Garrison Command Sergeant Major Course and various other professional development courses. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Administration from Upper Iowa University.

SMA Chandler and his wife Jeanne are the proud parents of six children and 11 grandchildren.

Chandler's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (7th OLC), Army Commendation Medal (7th OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1st OLC), Army Good Conduct Medal (10th Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Army Service Ribbon, Korean Defense Service Medal, Overseas Service Medal (Numeral 4), Noncommissioned Officer Professional Service Ribbon (Numeral 4), Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Superior Unit Award and the Combat Action Badge. He is a recipient of the Order of Saint George (Bronze Medallion), the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin and the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. SMA Chandler also serves on the Board of Directors for Army Emergency Relief.

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**SERGEANT MAJOR RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SECOND SESSION, 113TH CONGRESS

"QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MILITARY"

FEBRUARY 26, 2014

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Introduction

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the invitation to speak to you on behalf of the more than 2 million members of our Army team: Soldiers, their Family members, and our civilian employees. Representing the Soldiers in the Army that I love has been a humbling experience and I appreciate the support this committee has given our Army team over the past 12-plus years and for recognizing and valuing the sacrifice and service of our remarkable Soldiers. As I near my retirement, this will likely be my last opportunity to appear before you.

I would also like to welcome the new committee members. I appreciate you taking on the tremendous responsibility and I look forward to working with you to support our Soldiers.

We are especially grateful for the \$308 million in Fiscal Year 2014 funding provided by Congress for military construction to improve the quality of life of many Soldiers. These construction projects include barracks at Fort Gordon, Fort Leonard Wood, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, and the U.S. Military Academy, and Reserve Component projects at Camp Edwards, Camp Grayline, and Fort McCoy. Your continuing support has enabled us to improve the quality of life of Soldiers across the force.

Background

This past year has brought some significant changes to the Army, including the impacts of sequestration, the government shutdown, and the first and second order effects of a drawdown and budget reductions.

After 12-plus years of persistent conflict, SEC McHugh, GEN Odierno, and I are proud of all that our Soldiers, Family members, and Civilians have accomplished. But our Army is not focused on our past success, but rather our future.

The Army stands at a pivotal moment due to daunting fiscal challenges and strategic uncertainty. But even in the midst of these challenges our mission has not changed – to prevent conflict, shape the environment and, when necessary, fight and win our Nation's wars. As GEN Odierno recently stated, it is essential that our Total Army – the Active Army, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve – be ready to accomplish the range of military operations we are directed to perform. Our leaders and the American people rightly place their confidence in our professional competence and character, and they expect us to succeed. And, we will.

As we transition, we are making changes to our institutions and processes to ensure that we are maximizing the resources available to the Army. So we will focus on these five strategic priorities:

1. Adaptive Army Leaders for a complex world;

2. A globally responsive and regionally engaged Army;
3. A ready and modern Army;
4. Soldiers committed to our Army profession; and
5. Maintain the premier all-volunteer Army.

These also form the basis for the objectives outlined in our 2014 Army Strategic Planning Guidance.

Through these efforts, our All-Volunteer Army will remain the most highly trained and professional land force in the world. It will have the capability and capacity to provide expeditionary, decisive land power to the Joint Force and ready to perform across the range of military operations in support of Combatant Commanders to defend the Nation and its interests at home and abroad, both today and against emerging threats.

Although our Army is looking forward to new challenges, it is important to remember what we have done and continue to do. We are entering the 13th years of the longest war in our Nation's history. Nearly 40,000 Soldiers are serving in Afghanistan and an additional 120,000 are either forward stationed or deployed in nearly 150 countries. More than 1.6 million Soldiers have deployed during the past 12 years and many have deployed multiple times, some as many as six or even ten times. More than **5,000** Soldiers have given their lives on behalf of this Nation. This service and sacrifice cannot be forgotten as we move forward and focus on the challenges on our horizon.

Drawdown

All of us in the Army are grateful for the work Congress did on the FY14 authorization and appropriation bills, which give us the ability to build readiness over time. Our Army had been reduced to only two brigades rated at T-1 level for deployment. Sequestration limited funding to train, equip and, in some cases, care for our Soldiers. During that period, our Army leaders at all levels knew we were accepting some level of risk, so they focused on squad and platoon level training to maintain some level of readiness. This year's budget allows us to increase the number of ready brigades.

However, this fix is only short-term. Next fiscal year we again face sequestration-level funding. Just as last year, that will mean that our Army will lack flexibility and predictability, and our Soldiers, their Families, and our civilians will once again face the anxiety that comes with uncertainty. And we will again face serious readiness challenges.

To address readiness issues, our Army has accelerated the timeline to reduce our active force from 580,000 to 490,000 Soldiers while reducing our budget – even while still engaged in war, unprecedented in our history. This reduction is being done in a controlled and responsible manner over a compressed timeframe to allow the Army to reduce personnel costs. Those savings can then be used to ensure the force is both ready and equipped to the highest levels possible. Achieving the proper balance

between readiness, modernization, and end strength is critical to ensuring the Army is ready for any contingency.

As we continue implementing this drawdown, we will make sure to continue providing programs that value the service and sacrifices Soldiers and their Families have made to the military. Unfortunately, natural attrition alone will not achieve the Army's reduced end strength requirements. However, we are committed to assisting Soldiers and their Families as they transition to civilian life, and we encourage continued service in the Army National Guard or Army Reserve.

As our force reduces in size, our organizations will change. Some of our training posts will see changes in throughput or focus in some of their courses. We will continue to recruit America's best men and women, but those numbers will likely be smaller, and as we focus on new training goals and objectives, some training will expand.

Similarly, we are meeting a directive to reduce the size of our headquarters staffs across our Army commands, including both civilian and military members of those teams. We will likely find that many contracts that have supported our Army over the past 12 years can be reduced or ended. Soldiers who have been engaged in actively defending our nation during that time will return to a garrison environment and traditional support roles. Things like KP, police calls, post security and other duties have been part of my Army for as long as I have served and I firmly believe they help to develop leadership skills, a sense of good order and discipline, responsibility, safety, and pride in taking care of living and working environments.

Quality of Life

The quality of life of our Soldiers and their Families is critically important as the Army goes through this period of transition. Most importantly, the Army must focus on ensuring that we recruit and retain the smartest, most fit, and most resilient of America's youth. It is essential to leverage those actions and incentives that sustain the highest quality All Volunteer Force in the face of continuing fiscal pressures and ongoing assessments of benefits and entitlements.

For example, the Army's Tuition Assistance (TA) program provides financial assistance for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of Soldiers' professional and personal self-development goals. This program helps us to achieve the Army's goal of retaining quality Soldiers, enhancing their career professional progression, increasing the combat readiness of the Army, and eventually assisting Soldiers in their transition from the Army into successful civilian careers. The TA program supports the leader development imperatives of the Army Leader Development Strategy and supports Army Strategic Priorities.

During our comprehensive assessment of TA, we evaluated a number of changes based on their ability to support the intent of the TA program and compared them to other available programs providing education benefits. The changes we ultimately

implemented not only are consistent with the purpose of TA but also enhance sustained readiness of the Army and optimize scarce resources.

As the Army draws down, another important quality of life issue is successfully reintegrating those Soldiers and Families separated after 12 years of war. It is important that whatever support we provide has the greatest impact on sustaining readiness and resilience, so the timing of resource reductions should take into account this goal.

Transition

As we continue to draw down the Army, we understand our duty to treat Soldiers and Families not retained with dignity and respect. Through our Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP), we are fully committed to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. In coordination with the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, we are conducting assistance training and transition counseling for Soldiers beginning no later than 12 months from their transition date to enable Soldiers to successfully transition into civilian society.

ACAP provides transitioning Soldiers with the tools and resources to help make informed career decisions, be competitive in the workforce, and continue to provide positive contributions to their community after completing their active duty service. The transition process is focused on the Soldier and managed by commanders through performance metrics recorded in the automated tracking system of record, ACAP XXI.

To assist Soldiers in making the most of opportunities as they appear during that period of transition, the Army is exploring policy changes that provide opportunities for active component Soldiers to separate if they have secured employment, have been accepted into higher education, or want to transition to a position in the Army National Guard or Army Reserve.

Collectively, these programs and other recent changes have helped the Army reduce the percentage of unemployed Soldiers who are veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. This lower rate also reduces the Army's cost for annual Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX), making those monies available to support personnel, readiness, and modernization needs. Last year, the Army spent more than \$430 million on UCX, and we want to see that amount substantially decreased.

Another recent Army initiative to support Veterans is Soldier For Life. It is designed to enable Soldiers, Veterans, and Families to leave military service "career ready" and connect to an established network to find employment, education, and health resources. We know the value and outstanding capabilities these Soldiers can bring to any organization, and we encourage them to continue to serve our nation by instilling Army values, the Warrior ethos, and leadership in businesses and communities across the Nation.

The Soldier For Life program is a holistic approach to the military life cycle career of a Soldier. The U.S. Army takes care of teammates by ensuring Soldiers start strong, serve strong, and reintegrate strong so they remain Army Strong even after leaving the Army. The U.S. Army's strategic imperative of sustaining the Premier All-Volunteer Army is directly affected by how well our veterans reintegrate back into their communities.

Soldier for Life works to connect employers to transitioning Soldiers from all Army components: Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve. We help employers navigate the Army's reintegration network by developing lasting relationships and connecting them to transitioning Army talent.

I've been personally involved with this program over the past year and know its value. In March, I spoke to an audience of national healthcare providers at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor to discuss best practices and gaps in providing behavioral healthcare for Guard and Reserve Soldiers and their Families. The following month, I attended the National Beer Wholesalers Association's legislative conference in Washington, DC. During my visit, they pledged as an organization to hire transitioning Soldiers and their spouses in their businesses across the country. And last week, our Soldier for Life office in Los Angeles laid the groundwork for me to meet with dedicated individuals from the University of Southern California and the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles who are working two separate but collaborative efforts to help serve the largest population of veterans in the nation find employment, homes, and healthcare. This kind of support occurs across the country - and I want to thank everyone for reaching out to our Army team.

Ready and Resilient

As I stated last year, it is critically important for an Army with less manpower and a smaller budget to maintain peak readiness. The last 12-plus years have challenged our Army. The stress and strain of multiple deployments can manifest in high risk behavior as Soldiers try to cope with issues and problems without the proper help.

Our efforts this past year to address challenges such as post traumatic stress, suicide, sexual assault and harassment, hazing, and reckless behavior are making positive changes in organizational climate and leadership abilities, while at the same time, maintaining good order and discipline.

Even after an extraordinary commitment by the Army of time and money to address suicides, it has been a particularly difficult problem. However, we may be starting to see some signs that our investments are beginning to pay off. Our overall number of suicides across the force has decreased as we continue to work in concert with Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and cultivate a climate that supports those who responsibly seek help and those who act, intervene and are motivated to stand against behaviors that are contrary to our Army Values. Although we do not have

data yet to fully explain this improvement, we are analyzing our efforts to discover and reinforce future efforts.

Let me now turn to sexual assault, an issue I know that is very important to all of you here. Above all else, the Army is an organization built on and bound by values. Sexual harassment and assault in all its forms goes against every one of those values. Simply put, sexual assault is a crime that will not be tolerated. The overwhelming majority of Soldiers and Civilians serve honorably and capably, but we must recognize that the ill-disciplined few jeopardize the safety of all our people as well as the trust and confidence the American people have in their Army. For that reason, we have made the prevention of sexual offenses a top priority.

The Army's SHARP Program seeks to reduce and ultimately eliminate this crime from our ranks, and to compassionately and rapidly care for the victims, and we have made excellent progress in implementing it throughout the Army over the past year. Through the combined efforts of our military and civilian leaders at all levels, we've implemented numerous program and policy changes to address this insider threat. I believe the initiatives are leading to enhanced reporting, investigating, and prosecution of sexual assault offenses, and increasing the accountability of leaders. The changes includes revised policies that focus on constant assessments of command climates, changes to leader evaluations to ensure their commitment to SHARP goals, the addition of special legal counsel to support victims, and the establishment of more stringent screening criteria and background checks for those serving in positions of trust, including Sexual Assault Response Counselors and Victim Advocates.

Let me add one final, but important, note. Sexual assault is antithetical to competent command, and it is important that Army commanders retain their authority over the disposition of sexual assault cases. Removal of that authority would make it harder to respond to the needs of Soldiers within the command, especially the victims. Many of the Army's most difficult problems were solved by making commanders more accountable, not less. Therefore the Army opposes efforts to remove commanders from the disposition process.

The Army's goal in all of these efforts is to facilitate a culture change that will result in a positive command climate where the behaviors and attitudes that lead to sexual offenses are rare and victims feel free to report without fear of reprisal. Most important in development of trust is our commitment to Soldiers and the accountability of leaders at all levels.

Wounded, Injured and Ill

This past year also saw significant progress in our care for wounded, ill or injured Soldiers, and organizational changes that underscore that positive trend. Overall, the Warrior Transition Units (WTU)/Community Based Warrior Transition Units (CBWTU) population continues to decline as there are fewer Soldiers entering these units and more Soldiers departing, fewer deployments, fewer MEDEVACs, and fewer Reserve

Component mobilizations. As of February 3, 2014, the population of wounded, ill, or injured Soldiers assigned or attached to WTUs and CBWTUs was 6,988, the lowest level since the fall of 2007.

Force structure changes within the Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) reflect a decreasing WTU population while retaining scalability in order to meet the Army's future needs. To be sure, WTU force structure changes are not related to budget cuts, sequestration, or furlough. These changes will improve the care and transition of Soldiers through standardization, increased span of control, better access to resources on installations, and reduction of unnecessary delays in care.

We also continue to improve the process with the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). In FY13 the Army made tremendous progress across the IDES by significantly reducing backlogs at the Medical Evaluation Boards (MEBs).

Last year the Army made a concerted effort to eliminate the backlog of IDES cases at every stage under its control, thereby processing approximately 80% more cases than we had done in any previous year. Since the beginning of FY13, the Army processed over 34,000 cases. During the same period, more than 29,000 Soldiers either separated from the military or were found fit and returned to duty.

We are now meeting timeliness goals for all stages we control. The Army is continuing to collaborate with our VA partners to speed up IDES processing while ensuring Soldiers receive the benefits they have earned and deserve.

Closing

Throughout this past year, while continuing the fight, drawing down our force, and working within fiscal constraints, our Soldiers have continued to demonstrate their professionalism in several key ways. The expansion of entitlements and benefits to same-sex spouses has gone almost unnoticed by most Soldiers. This professionalism is also highlighted in our ongoing campaign to ensure every Soldier understands how their competence, character and commitment underpin the American public's trust and respect for the Army.

In closing, I want to recognize the amazing work being done every day by our Army Team. As the Sergeant Major of the Army, one of the best parts of my job is visiting our Soldiers, Families and Civilians across the world. The professionalism, dedication, and sacrifice they display every day is the reason our Army is the envy of every other in the world. Today, our Soldiers are the best trained, best manned, best equipped, and best led force in our history.

Tomorrow we will be smaller and we may be leaner, but we will continue to be the best trained, best manned, best equipped, and best led force in our history.

And, ten years from now, we will continue to be best, and I feel confident in making that statement because I know we will continue to have your support. Thank you for what you do.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak before you and tell our story. I welcome your questions at this time. Thank you and Army Strong.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you so much, Sergeant Major Chandler. I know that we all feel the same way. The best part of our job is getting a chance to get out and visit firsthand with the men and women in uniform, and it has reaffirmed our faith in this great nation—the extraordinary character and commitment of our young men and women in uniform. We thank you, sir, for your service.

And it is my privilege to recognize at this time the master chief of the Navy, Michael Stevens.

Delighted to have you with us here, sir.

MASTER CHIEF STEVENS OPENING STATEMENT

Master Chief STEVENS. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, and distinguished Members of this Committee. Today I am honored to represent more than 380,000 active and reserve sailors currently serving in the United States Navy.

As you and I sit here today, your Navy has 96 ships underway with more than 380,000 sailors, including 61,000 reservists, standing watch at home and overseas. In over 30 years of service I have watched these amazing men and women serve and ensure the freedom and security of our nation. The caliber of sailors that join the fleet today are educated, receptive, and eager to embrace the challenges that lie ahead.

While it is understood we are facing many budgetary challenges, our operational focus will remain the highest priority, as it always has.

Today's sailor overall has a high quality of life. However, our sailors also carry a burden of uncertainty, especially in the current fiscal environment.

These concerns of uncertainty include: potential pay and compensation changes, family programs and support services, and predictability with respect to deployment lengths. Our sailors are aware of future economic and fiscal challenges and are working to prepare for that reality.

In the end, they will rise to meet these challenges. However, our solemn commitment to their physical and mental welfare should not—I repeat, should not—become a casualty of budgetary uncertainty.

Our sailors and their families fully appreciate and make great use of the support programs you have carefully invested in them and their families—programs such as family housing and barracks, wounded warrior care, health services, family support resources, child care, and education. It is critical in today's fiscal environment that we protect these programs and services, which promote a thriving and healthy family unit and, in essence, the viability of our force.

Extended deployments come with a high cost. Most notably among them are family separation and operational stress. Sailors and their families understand deployments are a necessary part of the Navy life. However, it is imperative that we never underestimate their sacrifices.

Predictability with regard to deployment is paramount. It is understood that world events coupled with maintaining shipboard readiness are factors that contribute to uncertain deployment

schedules. To the largest extent possible, I believe it is vital that the Navy is provided with adequate force capacity to support mission demands and ensure reasonable deployment lengths are sustainable.

Our sailors and families stay in the Navy in large part because they believe and they trust that you and I have their best interest at heart. Trust in the Navy is fundamentally parallel with our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. The all-volunteer force is comprised of people who trust—they trust that we will treat them with dignity, respect, and due regard for their overall well being.

This trust is priceless. This trust puts in place the greatest weapons system we can provide the sailors of the United States Navy. That weapons system is called unit morale.

For this reason, I would argue that the support that this subcommittee provides to the Navy contributes greatly to our warfighting capability. As we navigate through these fiscal challenges I have no doubt that you will do your very best to ensure our sailors and their families have what is necessary to carry out the Navy's mission.

The chief of naval operations and I understand nothing—nothing comes second to combat readiness, and we are committed to preserving our people and our fleet programs to the fullest extent possible.

I sincerely thank you for the continuous support that each of you offer, and I do not take it for granted the commitment that you have made to ensure the success of our Navy. On behalf of the men and women who serve our Navy and country, I thank you. And I look forward to taking your questions.

[The information follows:]



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

MCPON (AW/NAC) Mike D. Stevens



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike D. Stevens was born and raised in Montana. He graduated from Arlee High School in May 1983 and immediately entered the U.S. Navy attending basic training in San Diego in June 1983.

Stevens attended Aviation Structural Mechanic Apprentice School in Millington, Tenn., and his first duty assignment was with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Two in Rota, Spain.

In October 2002, he was advanced to Master Chief Petty Officer and assigned to Fleet Composite Eight in Roosevelt Roads, P. R., as the Maintenance Master Chief and Command Master Chief. In October 2003, Stevens reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola and shortly

thereafter assumed the duties as the Command Master Chief. In August 2006, he became the Command Master Chief for Helicopter Mine Countermeasure Squadron 14 in Norfolk, Va. In September 2007, he was selected by Commander, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic to serve as the Wing Command Master Chief for the largest Helicopter Wing in the U.S. Navy. In January 2009, Stevens was selected as the Command Master Chief for Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet. Following 2nd Fleet, he served as the 16th Fleet Master Chief for Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command from August 2010 to September 2012.

Stevens' academic achievements include an Associate's Degree in Administrative Management Studies; Senior Enlisted Professional Military Education; Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education; Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government "Leadership in Crises"; and the National Defense University Keystone course. He is an honor graduate and the recipient of the prestigious Peter Tomich Award for exceptional military excellence from the Senior Enlisted Academy.

Stevens' personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), Navy Commendation Medal (five awards), Navy Achievement Medal (six awards), the Coast Guard Achievement Medal with operational "O", Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist Insignia, and Enlisted Naval Aircrew Wings.

Stevens became the 13th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on September 28, 2012.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

STATEMENT OF
MICHAEL D. STEVENS
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY
(AVIATION WARFARE/NAVAL AIRCREW WARFARE)
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES
OF THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
ON
FEBRUARY 26, 2014

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. As the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, I am honored to represent more than 380,000 active and reserve Sailors in the United States Navy. During the past 15 months, I have visited tens of thousands of Sailors and their families in the United States and overseas. Today, I am prepared to deliver you a summary of the quality of life that sustains our Sailors and their families.

Overall Quality of Life

Quality of life is currently high, but today's Sailor is concerned about the many quality of life issues that carry a burden of uncertainty, especially in the current fiscal environment. Chief among these concerns are:

- 1.) Potential Pay and Compensation changes;
- 2.) Family Programs and Support Services; and
- 3.) Predictability with Respect to Deployments.

As I navigate through the various commands and units of our Force, I am always inspired by their overwhelming work ethic and dedication and I am honored to serve with and represent these amazing men and women – your Sailors. I have no doubt that these issues of concern will be addressed with the utmost regard for their well-being.

Your Navy

The Navy understands that a budgetary reformation is fast-approaching, and we are working hard to implement policies that will meet end strength controls and planned budget execution. Such budgetary decisions will continue to be carefully monitored for impacts to fit,

fill, and tone, the health of the Force. Navy Active and Reserve Components continue efforts to stabilize, balance, and distribute the Force to ensure that Sailors are assignable, deployable, and distributable in support of the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) tenets: Warfighting First, Operate Forward, and Be Ready.

The overall health of the Force is "good," and morale is reasonably high; however, we continue to closely monitor the Tone of the Force and Personnel Readiness. Areas by which we measure these controls include:

- Physical, mental, family and financial stress;
- Morale, alcohol and substance abuse;
- Misconduct; and
- Recruiting, Retention, Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO), Personnel Tempo (PERSTMEPO), safety, training, and manning (Personnel Readiness).

Additionally, and in order to secure a healthy balance in quality of life and work, the Navy is committed to ensuring a two part obligation with respect to quality of service:

1. To ensure Sailors receive the finest training and equipment possible so they can deploy ready to accomplish their mission and return home safely, and
2. To ensure they and their families are properly compensated and cared for.

Recruiting

To ensure the Navy is prepared to meet future operational requirements, the Force must recruit Sailors in the right combination of ratings (jobs). For fiscal year 2014, through January 2014, the Navy met numerical goals with a total of 10,116 accessions. Being that quality of life and service is a fundamental feature that is to recruiting new Sailors, we hold an obligation to

provide Sailors with the best equipment, and training, possible. From the time a Sailor steps into basic training, we begin to develop and mold them into a leader who is prepared to serve and sustain the Force. Recruiting efforts are supplemented by an element of job security that extends into a career-long training continuum that will enhance a Sailor's personal and professional development. As we work with Congress, we hope to continue to provide the necessary tools to recruit the right Sailors, with the right skills, in order to meet current and future mission requirements.

Retention

Officer and enlisted inventory gaps remain in several critical specialties where operational tempo is high or pay disparities exist between the military and the private sector. Targeted special pays have a strong impact on reenlistments. Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs), in particular, are essential to retaining personnel in critical skills, such as the Nuclear Field, Information Dominance, and Special Warfare ratings. We continue to use SRB as a quality of life initiative to address these shortages, and we appreciate your continuing support for these important incentives.

End Strength

As of January 2014, our total Force is 323,051 active duty and 61,432 Reserve. This is on track with Navy's FY15 budget submit of 323,600 active and 57,300 Reserve. We are focused on maintaining the right number of Sailors to adequately man the Fleet and to ensure Sailors are in the right positions to accomplish our operational commitments. We strive to

provide the Fleet with the right fit and fill – assigning Sailors with the right skills and experience level to perform the most critical sea duty jobs.

It is understood we are facing an incredibly difficult fiscal environment that may challenge our ability to sustain adequate “manning” levels across the Force. As the Navy has had to adapt to an ever-changing fiscal environment, I have watched our Sailors continue to complete their missions with a dedicated, goal-oriented approach. I have seen the evidence of their hard work and been a witness to their determination. They are indeed, the driving Force behind our Navy.

Women in Submarines

Retention of women in the Navy has been historically challenging. Averages for female submarine officer retention will not be well known until FY19 when the first several year groups of female submarine officers are making decisions on whether to serve as a Department Head.

Naval Sea Systems Command recently conducted a habitability study that examined design modifications for: (1) enlisted female integration on all submarine platforms and (2) officer female integration on Virginia (VA) and Los Angeles (LA) class SSNs. The study further revealed that ship design modifications will be required for enlisted female integration on all classes of submarines. Study assessments also indicate that there are no obstacles for female officer integration on VA class SSNs supporting Navy’s goal to provide equal career opportunities for women to the greatest extent possible.

The Navy intends to integrate female officers aboard two VA class submarines starting in FY15; and as publically announced in January 2013, the Navy intends to assign enlisted women

to Virginia class submarines. Although enlisted women have not yet been assigned in submarines, a task force was established last year to coordinate and synchronize these efforts.

Housing

Family Housing and Single Sailor Housing is a crucial element in supporting Navy readiness and quality of life. By providing Sailors and their families the opportunity for suitable, affordable, and safe environments in the community, whether privatized, or Navy-owned, we are ensuring a critical component to the overall well-being of Sailors and their families.

Thanks to the support of this committee and members of Congress, we have improved, and continue to improve the housing available to our Sailors. In FY13, the Navy renovated a total of 28 barracks at 11 bases, and in FY14 we will prioritize renovations to ensure units meet health and safety standards. PB15 includes plans to sufficiently maintain Navy's family housing inventory and reduce inadequate inventory. It is critically important that we fully fund efforts in this area.

Family Support Programs

The Navy has extended strong resources to our Navy families, providing our Sailors with the reassurance that their families are being supported. This allows our Sailors to effectively focus on the mission at hand with peace of mind. Fleet and Family Support Centers offer a number of personnel and family support programs to reduce life stressors throughout the training and deployment cycles. Family Support Programs provide support to military members and their families whether the member deploys as part of a unit or individually. In addition, military members and their families may contact the Department of Defense sponsored Military

OneSource program for confidential assistance and comprehensive information or materials on a variety of military life topics. Military OneSource, available worldwide 24/7/365 by telephone or online for both active duty and reserve members, provided more than 885,000 services to military and family members in Fiscal Year 2013.

Navy Ombudsmen and Family Readiness Groups (FRG) are other essential components in our efforts to foster effective relationships between family members and commands. Ombudsmen function as an intermediary between commands and families to better prepare both Sailors and their families for the challenges associated with training and deployment. Ombudsmen also serve as liaisons between commands and families on a wide range of issues including pay and compensation, deployment schedules, child care, housing, etc. They keep the command informed regarding the overall health, morale, and welfare of command families.

For our Reserve Sailors, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) and the Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP) have been tremendously successful in caring for service members and their families before, during, and following deployment. The YRRP provides reserve Sailors and their families with information, services, referral, and proactive outreach opportunities via informational events and activities. PHOP services include psycho-educational briefings, behavioral health screenings, and phone/email follow-up to ensure Sailors have received the information, resources and services they need to enhance their state of wellness and readiness.

It is imperative that in today's fiscal environment, we protect these programs and services that promote a thriving and healthy family unit, and, in essence, the viability of our Force.

Navy Child and Youth Programs

Navy Child and Youth Programs (CYP) deliver services that help meet mission requirements and reinforce strong military families through activities that promote cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from ages infant through twelfth grade. Navy CYP also provides School Liaison Officers to support the transition needs of school-aged children and families by facilitating communication with local school authorities on the impacts of a military lifestyle on children. The Navy remains dedicated to ensuring our Sailors and their families are provided with adequate choices based on their respective needs and/or requests.

Sailor and Family Readiness

Deployments are a necessary part of Navy life, and as we have deployed our Forces throughout times of peace and conflict, it is imperative that we never underestimate the incredible strain that deployments impose on our Sailors and their families. The stresses associated with being a part of a Navy family have significant impact on the overall readiness of the unit, the readiness of the individual Sailor, and the readiness of their family.

One stressor that I briefly addressed above is the unpredictability of deployments. It is understood that real world events coupled with the strain of maintaining material readiness, are factors that contribute to uncertain deployment schedules.

Once a deployment assignment is delivered to the command, along with a predicted timeline, personnel are made responsible for properly preparing themselves and their families. They immediately begin to make important life decisions via their family care plans, automobile arrangements, household goods placement, financial accounts, and many other facets of their personal lives. When a change in length of a deployment or a delay in deployment is announced, it results in a significant strain on the morale of the Force which, in turn, negatively impacts

quality of work. I believe it is paramount that the Navy is provided with adequate capacity to support mission demands and ensure deployment predictability to the largest extent possible.

Sailors choose military service for many different reasons: loyalty to country, family and service tradition, and dedication are all undoubtedly significant factors. Sailors also recognize that with this commitment, comes great opportunity. I appreciate Congress' historical support of pay and benefit increases and quality of life initiatives that have sustained our Navy.

In past years, Congress has provided the Navy with competitive pay, allowances, housing, support programs, and educational opportunities that support Sailor and family readiness; this support helps to explain why many Sailors and their families decide to "Stay Navy." It is my hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that investments in quality of life and in quality of work combine to produce a quality of service that helps the Navy continue to attract and retain high quality Sailors.

Continuum of Care

Health care is extremely important to mission readiness and is incredibly appealing for the recruiting and retention of our Sailors and families. I am often made aware of our Sailors' families' future concerns in regards to health care. As we improve the process in which we provide for the health needs of our Sailors and families, I believe we should also direct attention toward severely injured Sailors. We must apply the same level of attention to those who return from deployments whose medical needs may not be immediately apparent.

We have continued to encourage leaders to be vigilant for service members who may be suffering from PTSD or TBI, and to encourage those afflicted with these conditions to seek help. We must also be able to provide care and support to address the physical and psychological toll

that multiple deployments have on our Sailors and their families. The Navy continues to work hard to dispel the stigma often associated with mental healthcare.

Recently, Navy has embedded mental health providers in primary care settings and operational units in order to identify and manage issues before they manifest as psychological problems. Navy Medicine continues to provide timely and comprehensive physical and mental health care for Sailors, Marines, and their families throughout the training and deployment cycle.

21st Century Sailor and Marine

Navy's 21st Century Sailor office was established in June 2013 and is responsible for integrating Navy's efforts in equal opportunity, Sailor personal and family readiness, physical readiness, alcohol and substance abuse prevention, suicide prevention, sexual harassment prevention, sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR), hazing prevention, and transition assistance. The 21st Century Sailor Office captures all these programs under one umbrella and provides top level attention and support to ensure critical resilience programs continue to grow and thrive. We provide resources to our Sailors and families to ensure they can take the challenges of a military lifestyle they face in stride.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

Sexual assault is a crime and is counter to our core values. It directly impacts operational readiness and unit cohesion and I have aggressively challenged enlisted leadership to impose a daily influence on their Sailors that is consistent with ensuring every Sailor is treated with dignity and respect. By identifying the disrupting factors that contribute to sexual assault, such as alcohol abuse and poor command climate, we may better focus on ways in which the Navy

should implement improvements to our leadership training. Leadership development programs will better prepare leaders for efforts to keep their Sailors safe and further shape a proper command climate.

Because many victims and offenders are junior Sailors, our training is targeted to those Sailors, and we actively support peer groups such as Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD) who train, mentor and sponsor awareness-raising events for fellow junior Sailors. We are also working to create a culturally-aware, educated, total Force environment intolerant of sexual assault, supported by a well-defined prevention, reporting, investigation, military justice, and victim advocacy program. The Navy is committed to reducing sexual assault with the goal of eliminating it from within our ranks.

In compliance with DoD initiatives and the guidance from the DoD and DoN Sexual Assault Prevention Response Offices (SAPRO), the Navy follows and supports the five Lines of Effort for eliminating sexual assault:

1. Prevention;
2. Investigation;
3. Accountability;
4. Advocacy and Victim Assistance; and
5. Program Assessment.

Tailored SAPR training has been given to all Officers and Chief Petty Officers focusing on leadership's role in setting the correct tone and climate to prevent and eliminate sexual assaults. All E6 and below Sailors receive training that focuses on Sailor responsibility for positive changes in their command and in their Navy, with emphasis on bystander intervention and responsible decision-making.

We will continue to use a metrics-based approach to evaluate our progress, and improve our prevention efforts.

Safe Harbor & Wounded Warriors

We provide a lifetime of individually tailored assistance designed to optimize recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Sailors and Coast Guardsmen. Navy Safe Harbor is the Navy's sole organization for coordinating the non-medical care of all seriously wounded, ill, or injured Sailors, Coast Guardsmen, and their families.

Non-medical care management support includes, but is not limited to, support services for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/PTSD, pay/personnel issues, invitational travel orders, lodging/housing adaptation, child/youth programs, transportation needs, legal/guardianship issues, education/training benefits, commissary/exchange access, respite care and transition assistance. Safe Harbor enrollment includes Sailors with combat-related wounds or injuries, those from shipboard accidents, and off duty accidents, and serious medical and psychological conditions, such as cancer and severe PTSD.

100% of Wounded Warrior enrollees are briefed by the Safe Harbor program on child care as part of their portfolio of support services available to them. If a wounded warrior requires child care, installation child care programs adapt to accommodate the individual family's needs. All Wounded Warriors have priority access into all Navy Child and Youth Programs. We continue to strive to improve the continuum of care and explore all avenues that may more effectively meet the needs of our severely injured Sailors and their families.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention in the Navy is an all hands evolution, all of the time. The Navy Suicide Prevention Program manages policy and programs to help Sailors live life fully, promote psychological and emotional wellness, and reduce barriers that discourage seeking help. A comprehensive four-prong approach includes training, intervention, response, and reporting to ensure we're providing all Navy personnel the support network and skills needed to thrive, not just survive.

The Operational Stress Control (OSC) program is the foundation of the training effort, supporting the fleet with resources to navigate the stressors and challenges commonly associated with Navy life to help them build resilience and maintain readiness—a major tenet of the Chief of Naval Operations' Sailing Directions.

We encourage proactive measures that Sailors, leaders, commands and families can take to mitigate stressors before they become crises, while identifying those who may be reacting to stress and need assistance. While our efforts focus on actions “left of the event,” post-vention is a critical component of our program, providing psychological first-aid support to commands that have experienced a suicide tragedy.

The NavyTHRIVE communications campaign was launched last year, focusing on providing Sailors, leaders and families with the tools and knowledge to thrive; the next step in the resilience ladder. “Thrive in your Community”, the 2013 Suicide Prevention Month theme, added a new dimension to NavyTHRIVE by emphasizing the importance of cohesion and togetherness when dealing with adversity. The Thrive During the Holidays campaign addressed the various components of a physically and psychological healthy lifestyle to reduce holiday stress.

Beginning January 1, 2014, Navy commands are now required to complete Operational Stress Control skills training within six months of deployment. This provides units tools to build Sailor resilience and command readiness.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)/Transition Goals, Plans, and Success (GPS)

Transition GPS replaced the 20-year-old Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The development and implementation of this initiative to extend the continuum of care to retirement, and well beyond, was a collective effort involving all military services. Created by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, with full participation by the Department of Veteran's Affairs, Department of Labor, and the Small Business Administration, Transition GPS increases Sailors' abilities to overcome challenges they may face in pursuit of their chosen civilian career path. Transition GPS is a reinvestment in our citizen-Sailors, and by providing ready, skilled, and service-oriented workers, we become a stronger nation.

The Navy Transition Assistance Program is currently executing a strategic shift that vastly increases the resources, training, and professional assistance to those personnel who are transitioning out of the service. This program is focused on a common set of life skills and then tailored to an individual's plan for a civilian job, higher education, or entrepreneurship. It is important, as we assist our personnel in a life transition, that we ensure they are receiving the information and opportunities that better assist them as they shift into civilian life.

Conclusion

Today's Sailor is perceptive, intelligent, and devoted to our country. I am confident that these outstanding men and women will continue to ensure the strength, power and worldwide

presence of our Force. As a result, your Navy will continue to play a pivotal role in worldwide security. Sailors and their families endure the challenges of multiple deployments and household moves all over the world. They miss anniversaries, the birth of a child, funerals and countless holidays, all while balancing the struggles of operational demands and putting life and limb at risk in service to the Nation.

It is my hope that the decisions of the Congress will continue to ensure that our Sailors' pay and benefits remain competitive to sustain the all-volunteer force, today and into the future. Such efforts, once executed, will enable us to continue to provide a quality of service commensurate to the sacrifices our Sailors and families make daily.

On behalf of the men and women of the United States Navy and the families who so faithfully support them, I sincerely thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much Master Chief. I particularly can agree with your comment that our greatest weapon is unit morale, something we all share—a sentiment we share, and deeply, deeply appreciate your commitment to the country and the Navy and your testimony today.

It is now my privilege to recognize Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Michael Barrett.

And look forward to your testimony today, sir. Thank you.

SERGEANT MAJOR BARRETT OPENING STATEMENT

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Thank you, sir.

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, and distinguished Members of this Committee, good morning. This is my third opportunity to address Congress and discuss important quality of life issues and our commitment to our Marines and their families.

These last 12 years have been most challenging. Thank you for your continued fidelity, your support. We are forever grateful.

But as you are all well aware, the global environment is not getting any nicer. Clever enemies are searching for windows of vulnerability and to exploit our liberties and our security.

And with the fiscal constraints that we are enduring we must more than ever stay just as committed to our recruiting and retaining—making Marines; warfighter readiness—being most ready when our nation is least ready; care for our wounded, ill, and injured; our family care programs—preserving strong families; tradition, readiness, preparedness, returning quality citizens after their selfless service; combating social ills—prevention, treatment, and resiliency; facility sustainment, restoration, and modernization for our billions of dollars worth of infrastructure.

Today I report that more than 38,000 Marines are forward-deployed, forward-engaged, shaping, training, and deterring aggression around the globe, supporting all six geographical combatant commanders. We are providing our nation with the capability to contain crisis, to fill the gap, or to hold the line.

We may be done with Afghanistan this year, but those that we have been fighting, they are not done with us. At our core the Marine Corps is the nation's crisis response force, and fulfilling this role is our top priority.

We have met and continue to meet our obligations in current conflicts, emerging crises, and steady state operations. To that point and most recently, your Marines' efforts have saved lives, provided much-needed relief, and evacuated over 19,000 souls ravaged by Typhoon Haiyan.

Our Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response successfully executed noncombatant evacuation operations in South Sudan and provided reinforcements to other embassies. And within the last 24 hours we have Marines from Quantico deploying to reinforce and support efforts in Kiev.

We have participated in hundreds of theater security cooperation activities with the armed forces of more than 15 partner nations. The 13th and 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are afloat and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit stands ready as a rapid-response force capability, providing stability in their area of responsibility.

And we continue to stand alongside the Afghan National Security Forces engaged in combat, conducting counterinsurgency operations and security force assistance advisory missions.

Marines can face America's adversaries on the front line or respond to any emerging crisis because of the care and support we provide our families on the home front. With the progress that we have made in our warfighting capabilities and Marine and family readiness programs over this past decade-plus, and as we draw down and move to a post-Operation Enduring Freedom environment, the Corps remains committed to building the most ready force our nation can afford, balanced across the five pillars of readiness: high-quality people, unit readiness, capability and capacity to meet combatant command requirements, infrastructure sustainment, and equipment modernization.

We are proud of our reputation for frugality and remain a best value for our country's defense. In these times of budget austerity, we—you can hold high expectations for our Corps to be good stewards of our taxpayer dollars.

The Marine Corps will continue to meet the needs of the combatant commanders as a strategically mobile force optimized for forward presence and be the crisis response force of choice for our leadership. We may have less, but it doesn't mean we are going to be doing less, nor will we do it less well.

Thank you for this opportunity to sit before this Committee.

[The information follows:]

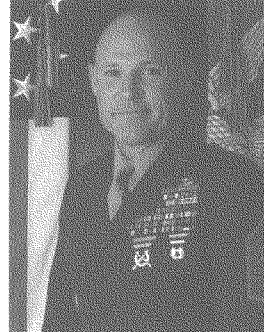
SERGEANT MAJOR MICHEAL P. BARRETT

17TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS

Micheal P. Barrett was born in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and raised in Youngstown, N.Y.

He enlisted in March 1981 and underwent recruit training at 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, Delta Company, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C.

In November 1981, Private First Class Barrett completed Infantry Training School at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was ordered to 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, Twentynine Palms, Calif., for duty. He served in a variety of billets from Grenadier to Platoon Sergeant.



Sergeant Barrett was transferred in August 1984 to Inspector-Instructor duty with 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, New Rochelle, N.Y. Outside of his primary duties as an infantry instructor, he was assigned numerous support duties to include; Armorer, Nuclear Biological Chemical Noncommissioned Officer, and Training Chief.

In September 1987, Sergeant Barrett was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines where he assumed the responsibilities as Platoon Sergeant of the Surveillance Target Acquisition Platoon. During the Gulf War he deployed forward with Task Force Papa Bear.

In April 1992, Staff Sergeant Barrett received orders to Drill Instructor School, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif. Upon completion of Drill Instructor School, he was assigned to Company F, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, and Chief Drill Instructor. In January 1994, he was selected as the Battalion Drill Master of 2nd Recruit Training Battalion.

In January 1995, Gunnery Sergeant Barrett was assigned to Scout Sniper Instructor School, Quantico, Va., as the Chief Instructor.

In September of 1996, Gunnery Sergeant Barrett was transferred to Marine Security Company, Camp David, Presidential Retreat, for duties as the Company Gunnery Sergeant and liaison to the United States Secret Service.

Upon completion of his tour at Camp David, First Sergeant Barrett was transferred to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Twentynine Palms, Calif., where he assumed the duties as

India Company First Sergeant from August 1998 until April 2000. He was then assigned to Headquarters and Service Company from April 2000 to March 2001. His tour culminated as the Senior Enlisted Leader of Weapons Company from March 2001 to June 2002.

Sergeant Major Barrett was then assigned to Recruiting Station Cleveland, Ohio, from July 2002 until May 2005, as the Recruiting Station Sergeant Major.

Sergeant Major Barrett was transferred to 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines in May 2005, where he completed two combat deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (04-06.2 and 06-08.1) in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

From October 2007 to May 2009, Sergeant Major Barrett was assigned as the sergeant major of Officer Candidates School, Quantico, Va.

Sergeant Major Barrett was selected as the 1st Marine Division Sergeant Major and took his post in June 2009. In December 2009, he assumed the duties as I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) Sergeant Major, and deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom (10.1/10.2) in March 2010. During this deployment, he also became the NATO Regional Command (Southwest) Command Sergeant Major for Nimruz and Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He turned over the 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and Regional Command (Southwest) in March and April 2011.

Sergeant Major Barrett assumed his current post as the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on June 9, 2011.

His personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with combat "V" and gold star, Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V" and three gold stars, Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal with two gold stars, Combat Action Ribbon with gold star, and the Presidential Service Badge.

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
SERGEANT MAJOR MICHEAL P. BARRETT
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
RELATED AGENCIES
ON
FEBRUARY 26, 2014**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide you an update on the Marine Corps' commitment to our Marines and their families.

The Marine Corps has and will continue to stand ready to face any challenges that need to be conquered to complete our nation's missions. We remain a forward-deployed, forward-engaged force. The Marine Corps is continuing to shape, train, and deter aggression. We are responding to every crisis, conflict, and contingency around the globe. The Marine Corps does this by being prepared---ready and standing at the door of chaos with the tools, the people, and the training necessary to do the nation's bidding and providing our nation's leaders with the time and decision space that they require.

UPDATE ON MARINE CORPS AROUND THE WORLD

The Marine Corps is involved across the world---Afghanistan, the Pacific, and U.S. Embassies. I would like to take a moment and highlight just a few of the great things our men and women in the Marine Corps have been doing to accomplish this nation's missions around the world.

- The Marine Corps was part of the U.S. government humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan that impacted more than 4.2 million people across 36 provinces. The Marine Corps and Navy were able to be in the Philippines within hours of the Philippine Government asking for international aid. During "Operation Damayan", the

Marine Corps was able to provide search-and-rescue sorties; transport aid workers; clear roads; evacuate 540 American citizens, 18,767 Philippine citizens and 301 nationals from other countries; and deliver 2,005 tons of relief supplies.

- Over the last year, the Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response (SPMAGTF-CR) has been busy in non-combatant evacuation operations (NEOs) such as in South Sudan and providing reinforcement to U.S. Embassies when needed as in the case of Libya.
- In Afghanistan, the Marine Corps Security Force Assistance Advisory Teams (SFAATs) (first deployed in 2012) have continually advised and assisted operations alongside Afghan National Security Forces. Additionally, the Marine Corps continues to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations throughout the country.
- The 31st and 13th Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) have been afloat as a forward-deployed, rapid-response force capability providing stability in their area of operational responsibility (AOR).
- Throughout the year, the Marine Corps participated in hundreds of Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities with the armed forces of more than 50 partner nations supporting all six Combatant Commands (COCOM).
- The U.S. Marine Corps spearheaded a maritime domain awareness demonstration at the Philippine Coast Guard Headquarters as part of the first Philippine-US initiative to enhance Philippine security and defense capabilities in January 2014.

Whether it is deploying to Afghanistan, assisting in humanitarian relief efforts in the Philippines, or working with less due to sequestration and government shutdown; the Marine Corps has not faltered in its operational readiness or commitment to the task at hand. The Marine Corps remains committed to being the most ready force our nation can afford.

Over the last few years, the question about how much to spend on the defense of the nation--our liberty---has come up as part of sequestration. A few years ago, many people had never heard or used the word “sequestration”, but now it has become a household word and an everyday issue for our Service men and women and their families. If post-sequestration reductions continue we will see what the cost is---not the savings---it will be at the cost of our greatest national treasure----America’s sons and daughters that make up our all-volunteer Force.

Recently, the Commandant of the Marine Corps and I have led an effort to “reawaken the soul of the Corps” in order to remind and reconfirm who we are, what we do and what America expects from her Marines. This reawakening will impact our programs to ensure that quality of life is at the levels our Marines and their families deserve. As we draw down in Afghanistan and move toward our role as crisis-response, force-in-readiness, we are laser focused in areas of discipline, faithfulness, self-excellence, and developing committed engaged leaders. The challenge in our efforts is the fiscal burden, the uncertainty over the next few years.

Sequestration and fiscal constraints, global engagements, force shaping, and many other environmental conditions impose challenges and opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2015 and beyond, we are beginning to realize the effects of budget cuts. As our landscape changes, regardless of the funds available every dollar must yield positive return and contribute to the readiness of the Marine Corps. We will continue to monitor readiness across our *Five Pillars of Readiness*:

High Quality People, Unit Readiness, Capability and capacity to Meet the Combatant Command Requirements, Infrastructure Sustainment, and Equipment Modernization. To protect our readiness under current funding levels, we can only do this at the cost of infrastructure sustainment and equipment modernization as well as assessing the various programs and resources we provide to Marines and their families and where savings can be realized. The decisions were carefully made for the current fiscal climate to still meet the needs of the Marine Corps, but over time degradation to facility sustainment, restoration and modernization and unnecessary negative impacts to the force and our families will ultimately suffer.

***MARINE CORPS MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE IN CURRENT FISCAL
ENVIRONMENT***

Regardless of the decisions that are made regarding the budget, the Marine Corps remains acutely aware of the critical relationship between quality of life and Marine Corps readiness. Marines can face the enemy on the frontline, because of the care and support we provide on the home front. Our commitment to the Marine is during their entire lifecycle, from boot camp through separation or retirement, and beyond. The Marine Corps will continually ensure the long-term stability of Marine and Family Programs by using evidence-based practices; ensuring our programs meet all credentialing and accreditation to ensure consistency of care across the Marine Corps; continually assessing our programs; and ensuring that we are strategically communicating to our Marines and families so they are aware of all resources available to them.

As we continue to draw-down our efforts in Afghanistan and reduce our end strength to 175,000, we remain committed to a continuum of care by ensuring family readiness and care;

supporting families of the fallen; caring for our wounded, ill, and injured; providing behavioral health services; assisting our Marines transition to being successful civilians; and continuing to make improvements to infrastructure and facilities. In the current and upcoming fiscal years, we remain committed to our mission.

The future of Marine and Family and Quality of Life in the Marine Corps will not be served by “the way it’s always been” mentality or returning to pre-combat environments. With changing demographics, mission, and environment at hand, the Marine Corps will continue to be good stewards of our resources, always be taking and making assessments, and improve our efforts where we can for those we serve.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Marine Corps continues to take steps to eradicate sexual assault among our ranks. Sexual assault is a shameful and disgusting crime that has no place in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps three-phase Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Campaign Plan (Strike, Implement and Sustain) outlines our efforts to reduce, with a goal to eliminate, sexual assaults. Since its inception in June 2012, the Marine Corps has addressed sexual assault in multiple areas by driving a tremendous infusion of training, restructuring our oversight organizations, and assisting senior leadership efforts. Our SAPR efforts thus far have seen a continued rise in reporting. In FY13, reports of sexual assault in the Marine Corps increased by 86%, continuing a trend started in FY12, which saw a 31% reporting increase. In addition, 20% of all FY13 reports were made for incidents that occurred prior to the victim joining the Corps;

15% were made for incidents that took place over one year ago. With sexual assault being an under-reported crime, we believe that these trends speak directly to the trust and confidence that Marines have in their immediate commanders and the overall Marine Corps program. These encouraging developments suggest that our efforts are working to increase awareness of SAPR resources and to establish a healthy environment of respect and dignity where victims feel confident in coming forward. As we speak to our Marines about their commitment to being guardians of our Core Values, part of that is to continue strengthening our victim care programs and offender accountability. Now that Phase I is completed, Phase II is designed to continue our positive trends ensuring the sustainment of the energy and momentum of the Campaign Plan, while further implementing large-scale institutional reform, emphasizing prevention through training, and having more deliberate involvement by our senior leaders.

To date, we have put in place initiatives including a General Officers SAPR Symposium, SAPR training at Sergeants Major Symposium, Command Team Training, "Take a Stand" for non-commissioned officers, and "All-Hands" training. We have also customized Corps-wide SAPR training programs according to the rank and level of responsibility of Marines. Additional SAPR initiatives include the development of Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), new Command Climate Surveys, and mandated credentialing requirements and continuing education in advocacy for all SAPR personnel.

The increased trust and confidence victims have in their commanders, demonstrated by increased reporting, created a corresponding increase in the military justice caseload related to sexual assaults. Between FY 2012 and FY 2013, Marine prosecutions for adult and child sex offenses increased from 59 to 119. In anticipation of this increased caseload of more complex prosecutions, the Campaign Plan also restructured our entire legal community to ensure we have

the right assets to prosecute these complex cases. New Regional Trial Counsel (RTC) offices provide consolidated resources, including experienced field-grade complex trial counsel (CTC), a civilian highly qualified expert (HQE) in sexual assault prosecution, embedded investigators, a legal administrator, and support staff. The RTC can pull from these resources to assign the right counsel, on the right case, in the right location.

In addition to the restructuring of the legal community, on January 1, 2014, the Marine Corps' Victims' Legal Counsel Organization (VLCO) became fully operational. The VLCO provides legal representation to all victims of sexual assault, and also to victims of other crimes. The new VLCO, along with our continued SAPR efforts, show that engaged, committed leadership remains the key as we reawaken the Corps sense of tradition and ethics, and reinforce the values that make us America's expeditious force in readiness.

***REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PREVENTION, TREATMENT,
AND RESILIENCY***

The Marine Corps firmly believes that readiness of the Corps is a direct result of maintaining individual Marine fitness. The Marine Total Fitness (MTF) concept is a holistic focus on spiritual, social, mind, and physical. This unified approach supports the total fitness of the Marine Corps via the relationships Marines form with other Marines, their leaders, and their families.

An important component of MTF is to proactively address the complex issues facing our Marines and their families after over a decade of persistent conflict. Even as the Marine Corps moves into a post Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom environment, there will

be a significant need of services to support Marines and families facing a potential delayed onset of symptoms, which requires diligence in prevention and early intervention. To address these needs, the Behavioral Health Program acts as an integrated service delivery model that facilitates the collaborative efforts and resources of all behavioral health elements including Family Advocacy, Substance Abuse, Combat Operational Stress Control, and Suicide Prevention. Our mental health surge capacity is based on implementing strong strategies for commanders and installation staff, and investing in evidence-based practices and delivery methodology. The purpose of the surge is to enhance mission readiness and welfare of Marines and their families, by providing capacity for rapid identification of resources and assistance, which promotes the resilience of our Marines and their families.

Part of reawakening the Corps is to continue to stress that all Marines have a responsibility to look out for one another and to assist anyone who might be struggling. Our Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training (MAPIT), that is beginning to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2014, uses the operational Marine Corps to more fully understand the spectrum of behavioral health issues using a universal, peer-to-peer model. MAPIT takes the best practices from our training program, Operation Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR), along with other evidence-informed prevention tools to deliver the right prevention tools to the right Marines at the right time. These include giving Marines the skills to prevent and mitigate stress injuries in themselves and their fellow Marines, as well giving commanders support in building unit strength, resilience, and readiness. Additionally, the DSTRESS line continues to provide anonymous, 24/7 counseling services to any Marine, attached Sailor, or family Member. Enhanced resilience, achieved through training and improved physical, spiritual, social, and

psychological fitness, can mitigate post-traumatic stress, affect incidents of undesirable and destructive social behaviors, and lead to greater likelihood for future good health.

Behavioral Health Programs are now focused on prioritizing services to target Marines and improve our program capacity at the installation and unit level through enhanced professionalization of our workforce, accreditation oversight of the programs, and surge capacity to address access to care issues. One component of this approach has been to substantially increase the number of trained behavioral health personnel available to provide non-medical counseling services and treatment. The result has been to expand Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) to provide confidential care in a unit or installation setting. Additionally, we have developed community counseling capabilities to improve screening, prevention and counseling services at Installation Community Counseling Centers. In Fiscal Year 2014, Behavioral Health will be implementing the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Prevention Program, which aims to improve the implementation, fidelity, and evaluation of behavioral health prevention initiatives across the operating forces.

***REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH TRANSITIONING MARINES
INTO QUALITY CITIZENS***

As our priorities shift from wartime requirements to post OEF, a key focus is on Marines transitioning out of the Marine Corps. Transitioning Marines need the right preparation to reach personal goals and effectively translate their military experience to a successful civilian life. Transition is a process, not an event. Beginning at recruitment, the Marine Corps strives to ensure that we are providing a continuum of tangible learning, training, or experiences that makes every Marine transition ready throughout their career.

The Marine Corps Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) must be completed by Marines within 12 months of separation or within 24 months of retirement, but no later than 180 days prior to separation or retirement. TRS is a week-long program that includes a mandatory standardized core curriculum followed by the choice of one of three additional two-day tracks that is in line with the future goals and objectives of the individual Marine: (1) College/Education/University delivered by Marine Corps staff; (2) Career/Technical Training delivered by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs staff; or (3) Entrepreneurship delivered by the Small Business Administration. Additionally, the Marine Corps involves leadership in the transition process through Capstone, where the separating Marine sits with the Commander or the commander's representatives no less than 90 days before separation to verify the Marine has met career readiness standards. In Calendar Year 2014, the Marine Corps will incorporate a life cycle approach to transition preparation that will allow Marines to meet Career Readiness Standards well in advance of the Transition Readiness Seminar.

With the significant reduction in end strength of the Marine Corps over the next few years, it is vital that our commitment to our Marines includes adequate preparation to leave the Marine Corps with all the resources and advantages to be able to translate being a Marine to civilian life.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PRESERVING STRONG FAMILIES

During Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, Marine and Family Programs increased support to family programs to reduce the impact of stressors; enable quick acclimation to the Corps; build deployment knowledge and skills; and improve access to care

and official information for Marines and families to ensure operational readiness. We have seen that increasing support to these programs has had a positive impact on quality of life. In support of strong families, the 2012 Quality of Life Study found significant increase in satisfaction in three life domains: Residence, Income, and Standard of Living, and in Marines relationships with their children. Findings from the 2012 Quality of Life Study specific to Marine and Family programs indicated a majority having the training necessary to deal with the stress of deployment and/or combat, and being satisfied with military support services overall.

The Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program and Marine Corps Family Team Building Program are both designed to strengthen and fortify Marines and their families. Our civilian Family Readiness Officers are an asset in ensuring Marines and their families receive official communications, readiness and deployment support, information and referral services for support services and volunteer management. With our shift in wartime requirements and volume of previous years' investments into various family readiness requirements, we are postured to continue priority support to OPFOR units and universal access to all for information and referral services. Specifically, the Marine Corps is continuing to leverage technology, such as eMarine for communication with over 285,000 subscribers, as well as other training and support webinars. Since implemented in April 2013, over 10,770 registered users have participated in Marine Corps Family Team Building online courses, which includes courses on stress management, anger management, and emergency preparedness. The Marine Corps will continue to tap into this technology and others to provide resources for our deployed and returning Marines and families.

Our Family Care programs provide programs that support the care and development of Marine Corps children from birth to their teens. Through our Children, Youth and Teen

Programs (CYTP), the Marine Corps has served 49,078 children, youth, and teens in Fiscal Year 2013.

We have 11,071 family members with special needs. In Fiscal Year 2013, 405,000 hours of respite care was reimbursed under the Exceptional Family Member Program Respite Care. This program provides respite care benefit for those Marines whose family members have moderate to severe special needs. Our Exceptional Family Member Program coordinators will continue to work to partner with local, state and private organizations to help Marines and their families cobble together their support and care requirements.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARING FOR OUR FAMILIES OF OUR FALLEN

The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program remains committed to ensuring the families of our fallen Marines are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor. The loss of a Marine is always difficult, especially for the family and we are always seeking to improve survivor assistance. Caring for the families of our fallen is not just an immediate challenge, but one that is long term. The Marine Corps Long Term Assistance program is a permanent resource for the next of kin, ensuring they receive sustained quality assistance from the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is a 24 hour-per-day operation manned by Marines trained in casualty reporting, notification, and assistance procedures. Our Casualty Assistance Call Officers are responsible for notifying next-of-kin; assisting with burial arrangements; navigating and applying for benefits and entitlements; obtaining reports of

investigations; and assisting in contacting benevolent and philanthropic organizations. Our Casualty Assistance Call Officers go through an initial training program followed up with continual training and assistance when needed. Shortly after the funeral, families are connected to representatives from the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). This nationally recognized provider, at no cost and available 24/7, provides our families a full range of support, crisis intervention, casework, grief and trauma support.

**REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARE FOR OUR
WOUNDED, ILL AND INJURED**

The Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) continues to function as a central pillar of the Marine Corps' pledge to "keep faith" with those who have served. Whether a Marine is wounded in combat, suffering from a chronic unresolved illness, or injured in a training accident, the WWR stands ready to provide recovery care. For the Marine Corps, recovery care is *not* a process. Care coordinated through the WWR is soundly based upon an authentic relationship between staff and the Marine and his or her family members. This bond allows all parties to be vested in a common purpose: ensuring the WII Marine and their family members smoothly and successfully meet their identified goals.

Ensuring Wounded, Ill and Injured (WII) Marines' Future Success

History confirms that the majority of WII Marines who receive care from the WWR will not return to duty. Knowing this, it is a paramount goal of the WWR to help WII Marines reintegrate to their communities with the confidence to focus on their abilities and fully recognize that their best days are still to come.

Following injury and case review, a WII Marine's path to success typically begins with a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). The Marine Corps' Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs) are assigned to WII Marines (based upon case acuity) and are responsible for conducting initial and ongoing CNAs which are used to develop the Marine's Comprehensive Recovery Plan (CRP). Once the Marine's CRP is established with identified actions, the RCC begins coordination with all internal and external stakeholders to help the Marine and family realize their goals. At any given time, there are approximately 1,000 Marines (along with their family members) receiving the support of an RCC.

A significant part of the CRP is employment and education support. To address this need, the WWR has a Transition Cell. Transition Cell Specialists, located at WWR Headquarters and Wounded Warrior Battalions at Camp Pendleton, California and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, work with WII Marines and families to assist them with the development of their career and education plans. Utilizing career assessment tools and leveraging the resources of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Counselors, Marines along with their WWR Transition Specialists, develop a plan to reach their career goals. Types of WWR transition assistance include: career exploration (employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship), resume development, education applications, interview skills, and coordinating federal internships.

The WWR does not utilize a "fire and forget" mentality. We recognize that most recently-transitioned WII Marines will require some degree of continuing assistance. To address this requirement, the WWR continues to employ District Injured Support Coordinators at various sites (aligned with Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Integrated Services Networks) around the country to provide face-to-face assistance when required. DISCs provide a multitude

of services to include ensuring Marines are registered with the VA, providing information on various community resources, and linking WII Marines in need back to the WWR for assistance.

Additionally, a key component of the WWR's transition assistance includes the provision of 90 days of post-service support to bridge the gap in services between DoD and VA during a WII Marine's transition. Focused areas of support include: Combat Related Special Compensation, Concurrent Receipt Disability Pay, housing, VA benefits, employment and education referrals, family support, and follow-on medical care (TRICARE, VA Healthcare). More than 1,800 Marines have received or are currently receiving post-service support.

Outreach and Staying Connected

The Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center is not a typical call center in purpose or function. It is an outreach and contact center that actively maintains contact with and tracks an assigned population of WII Active, Reserve, Retired and Veteran Marines throughout their life. It includes two Contact Centers at the Wounded Warrior Battalions (Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune), which track active duty WII Marines who are recovering with their parent commands. While the Call Center averages 9,500 outreach calls per month to Purple Heart recipients, Marines on the Temporary Disability Retirement List and Marine Veterans, it also allows the Marine Corps great flexibility to focus on specific emergent at-risk populations. For example, during natural disasters, such as last year's floods in Colorado or the tornados in Oklahoma, the Call Center conducted outreach to WII Marines and families in those surrounding areas to provide information on relief efforts, emergency shelters, and food bank locations.

The Call Center also serves as the WWR's center of activity for social media and rapid action polls. The social media capability (Facebook, Twitter, and mobile app) enables the

continual flow of relevant care information to WII Marines and families and the polls allow the Regiment to gain important feedback for program improvement.

Future of the WWR: Care Continues

Marines and their family members, the Congress, and the public at large can be reassured that the Marine Corps, through the WWR, will continue recovery care in times of war and in peacetime. Irrespective of the global security environment, recovery care support must be enduring in view of issues resulting from the current decade of war: catastrophic injuries requiring massive amounts of acute care, traumatic brain injury, and psychological health problems. These conditions are not solved by short-term care and will require continuing services, an enduring commitment. Just as the Marine Corps is strategically agile and flexible, the WWR will endeavor to expand and contract depending upon requirements. The WWR will always stand ready to support Marines who sacrifice for our Nation.

**REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARING FOR OUR
MARINES IN THE FIGHT**

Deployed support is one of the most important services we provide. Our Exchange, Recreation, Fitness, and Communication services boost morale and reduce mission-related stress.

- ***Exchange.*** Ongoing missions in Afghanistan include the operation of a Direct Operation Exchanges Tactical (DOX-T) at Camp Leatherneck, one Tactical Field Exchange at Living Support Area 13, and numerous Warfighter Express Services Teams (WEST) operating out of Camp Leatherneck. We also have two Marine Corps

Exchange (MCX) Mobile Tactical Field Exchange (MTFE) Trailers, which can serve as fully functional retail stores. Equipped with a diesel generator, the MTFE can operate on site for up to 72 hours and can provide indefinite operations when accompanied with a resupply container and connected to municipal power. The trailer can be used to support tactical field exercises, disaster relief, and special events requiring retail support. The MTFEs are road-ready and are based at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune.

- ***Recreation and Fitness.*** We provide sports, recreational, and fitness equipment to units throughout Helmand Province. This transportable equipment includes sports/recreation cooler kits filled with sports gear and board games, electronic game kits, Theater-in-a-Box kits, and functional fitness equipment for use in austere environments. Reading materials, both electronic and paperback, are also distributed. Our award-winning libraries provide online tools for research, recreation and professional development. Several libraries offer private webcam meetings so families can stay connected with their deployed Marines.
- ***Communication.*** Morale satellite services are available to deployed Marines. We have delivered 13 small satellite communications systems to units in Afghanistan. Each system has two phones that provide 6,000 free minutes per month and five laptops that allow internet browsing, social networking, and chat/video capabilities to deployed Marines.

- ***MCCS Amenity Wi-Fi Solution.*** The Marine Corps Community Services Amenity Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) Solution program acquires, deploys, administers, and supports Wi-Fi capability at no-cost to Marines and Families. This morale and welfare initiative helps families stay in contact while separated from their Marines. Wi-Fi is conveniently located on 19 installations and 250 facilities such as, temporary lodging facilities, exchange food courts, libraries, education centers, child and youth centers, Clubs, and Wounded Warrior program facilities.

Marine Corps Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) activities support the readiness, resiliency and retention goals of Marines. Semper Fit and Recreation programs align to support the social and physical well-being of Marines and Sailors, to encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance quality of life and to amplify the Marine Corps' focus on mission and readiness. The comprehensive strength and conditioning programs, High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) and Aquatic Maximum Power – Intense Training (AMP-IT), serve to optimize physical performance and combat readiness for all active duty and reserve Marines. In 2013, "For the Leathernecks", a social recreation event, reached over 20,000 single Marines, many of which recently returned from a deployment or training exercise. These shows enrich esprit de corps and unit cohesion to support the 21st century Sailor and Marine, and Marine Corps Total Fitness strategies. Semper Fit and Recreation expanded Operation Adrenaline Rush (OAR), which has reached over 8,000 Marines since the pilot program began in FY12, to eight installations last year. OAR assists Marines in reintegration after deployment by maintaining combat readiness, and reinforcing unit cohesion through high adventure outdoor activities like white water rafting, paintball, or rock climbing.

The Marine Corps resale system is also pleased to support the physical and financial health of Marines, Sailors, and their families. Through a variety of programs related to the Secretary of the Navy's 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative, our resale system supports physical health. The Commandant recently issued a memorandum regarding alcohol sales. It instructs all Marine Marts adjacent to barracks to remove distilled spirits. Additionally, the memo limits alcohol sales times to 8:00 AM thru 10:00 PM, and dedicated floor space to no more than 10 percent of the total retail space. Another significant step to support 21st Century Sailor and Marine came in 2012 when MCX instituted tobacco price parity. This effort complements the initiatives that Semper Fit has taken in training and education of tobacco cessation. Further, MCX offers tobacco cessation items at cost for patrons as part of our value program, "Xtreme Value." This program supports the financial readiness of Marines and their families and offers items such as diapers, formula, baby food, bread, and milk at cost. Additionally, MCX offers a variety of both branded and private label products from clothing to cosmetics to electronics to toys to home furnishings to serve as a "one stop shop" for Marines and families. Our Xtreme Value program offers the brands and products important to our customers at the best price possible. MCX is committed to supporting initiatives like the White House's Joining Forces Initiative to employ veterans and family members. As a member of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program, MCX helps to provide jobs to military family members who may be worried about finding a job at their next duty station. Currently, nearly 30 percent of MCX employees are military family members.

**REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH QUALITY FACILITIES
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Marine Corps continues to strive for a prolonged commitment to facilities and infrastructure that supports operations and quality of life for our Marines and their families.

The Marine Corps currently maintains over 100,000 bachelor enlisted housing spaces worldwide for permanent party and trainees.

- From Fiscal Years 2008 – 2012, the barracks construction projects were planned to replace inadequate facilities, provide a consistent 2+0 standard across the Marine Corps, and eliminate space deficiencies by 2014. These projects were programmed to meet 90 percent of the requirement for a 202,000-Marine force and are now projected to meet just under 100 percent of the requirement for a reduced force.
- Fiscal Year 2013 and future barracks projects are primarily related to specific force relocations and student/training needs, not the previous Barracks Initiative. The Fiscal Year 2013 MILCON program included two barracks projects that are not part of the Barracks Initiative; these will provide spaces for our Marines at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and at The Basic School for student officers.
- The Marine Corps is the youngest, most junior, and least married of the four military Services. Providing appropriate and comfortable living spaces that positively impact the morale and development of these young men and women makes sense.
- The Marine Corps' goal is to provide a 2+0 room standard that allows two junior enlisted Marines (E1-E3) to share a room and bath. We believe that assigning two junior Marines to a room is the correct balance between the privacy desired by the

Marines and the Marine Corps' goals of providing companionship, camaraderie, and unit cohesion. This balance provides the atmosphere we believe is necessary to motivate, train and develop Marines, while fostering unit integrity.

Noncommissioned officers (E4 and E5) are provided a private room with bath in a 2+0 room.

Marine Corps families are an integral component of readiness. We must always remember that Marines and their families serve out of a sense of duty and loyalty to our country and, as they do so, face the difficulties of the military lifestyle - frequent relocations often far from extended family and frequent deployments that separate families for months at a time. We have a responsibility to provide adequate family housing to our families.

- Continued support for full funding of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) allows more families to access quality, affordable housing in the local community. This is important since more than two-thirds of service members do not live on a military installation.
- However, we have over 24,000 homes worldwide for the many families who prefer to live in military or Public Private Ventures (PPV) housing for a number of reasons, including economics, safety, schools, and community support. PPVs, combined with traditional military construction, will continue to build and improve the homes necessary to supplement local community housing.

Currently 96 percent of our world-wide inventory is privatized and we continue to see success from our PPV projects across Marine Corps installations. PPVs have not only improved the homes in which our families live, they are also providing community support facilities such as community centers, playgrounds and greenscapes that help create neighborhoods and a sense of community for our Marines and their families.

Our inventory of military housing and associated operations and maintenance costs is growing as the first of over 1,000 homes to be constructed in Iwakuni by the Government of Japan start to come on-line this year. As part of long-standing Agreed Implementation Plans, these new homes will support Marine families relocating from Okinawa and Navy families relocating from Atsugi.

In Fiscal Years 2009-2014, the Marine Corps received \$11.4 billion in new construction and design. With this funding, we are providing new quality of life facilities, improved operational and training facilities, and more up-to-date utility infrastructure systems. Thanks to your support, projects have been funded for such items as new facilities to maintain state-of-the-art aircraft, improved live-fire training ranges, new applied and academic instruction facilities, physical fitness facilities, child care facilities, barracks, and command-and-control buildings. Future funding requests will continue to target new platform requirements, force structure repositioning, and replacement of inadequate facilities.

As resources overall and military construction funds in particular become more constrained, the Marine Corps will continue to rely on the sound stewardship of existing facilities and infrastructure to support our needs. It is always a pleasure to visit our installations and hear young Marines talk about the work they perform in these new facilities.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS

During a time in which we, as a nation, have been continuously engaged in 12 years of fighting, we are doing so with a voluntary force. No other time in our country's young history have we fought this long. Less than half a percent of Americans voluntarily wear the uniform of one of our military services. These men and women have chosen to put on the cloth intuitively knowing the joy and sense of purpose that only comes through great challenges and subordination at a cause greater than themselves. These men and women---are neighbors, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and loved ones---know what it means to keep company with the finest men and women in a world under the toughest conditions. Living their lives right and to the fullest, while providing a vital function to society. Their sacrifices ensure the safety of not just communities, but the nation, our lifestyle, and our liberties.

A statement often attributed to our first Commander in Chief, perfectly sums up what this nation is facing when it comes to their military, which I would like to leave with you today. "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation." I say this to this Committee to reiterate that your decisions now will have an impact that will go well beyond these conflicts and the current men and women voluntarily serving. Uncertainty in whether they will be able to continue a career in the military due to drawdown; what services and resources will be available to them and their families when serving; and what will happen to any retirement when they get out---all are having an impact on our current force and the young men and women that will be considering serving in the future. We cannot jeopardize our liberty.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Sergeant Major, and appreciate your testimony, the service to the country, and also making sure to point out to us that although the commander in chief may have said we are done with Afghanistan, those who are at war with us are not done with us. It is important to remember that. Thank you, sir, very, very much.

Also, finally, at this time I am honored to recognize Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody and welcome your testimony. And thank you, sir, for your service to the nation.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OPENING STATEMENT

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, distinguished Members of the subcommittee, morning and thank you for your continued interest and support in the quality of life in our military.

It is certainly an absolute honor for me to be here today with my fellow senior enlisted advisors as you represent the fine men and women that serve this great nation.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share with you the concerns of not just the enlisted force but the 690,000-plus total force Airmen and their families.

In the year since we last met our Air Force has faced challenges on multiple fronts. We have pushed through a period of sequestration; we have been forced to stand down flying squadrons, furlough civilians, and watch our readiness level significantly decline. We have endured a government shutdown and significant uncertainty, in turn, with respect to mission capability, compensation, and the meaning of service in the world's greatest Air Force.

There is no question that the past year has been extremely stressful on all of our members of the Air Force—active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and our civilian Airmen and their families.

The coming year will bring continued stress as we move toward a new normal—an operations tempo and fiscal reality we have put into action and motion to significantly reduce the size of the Air Force up to 25,000 Airmen who have proudly dedicated their lives in service of our great nation. While these actions are necessary to facilitate critical modernization and restore force readiness, they bring continued uncertainty and stress for our Airmen and their families.

Transparency and communication amongst our Airmen and families will be critical as we move through these programs. We cannot forget that our Air Force is powered by people—Airmen who clearly give us a distinct advantage. Throughout the past year I have traveled to multiple bases, visited with tens of thousands of Airmen and their families, and I can candidly tell you the budget challenges and continued uncertainty are not lost on the force.

However, regardless of this uncertainty, one thing remains clear: Airmen are clearly and deeply dedicated to accomplishing the mission, and they are truly doing amazing work around the world every day.

This past year we responded without hesitation to natural disasters on our own soil in Oklahoma and the soil of our allies in the Philippines. We have maintained a continuous presence in the Cen-

tral Command Area of Responsibility (AOR) with 23,000 Airmen, and supporting combatant commanders in all corners of the globe with more than 217,000 Airmen today supporting a combatant commander.

Our Airmen have faced and overcome challenges at every turn and continue to serve honorably and proudly in defense of our nation.

Sadly, the commitment to preserve this freedom for our nation comes at a cost. We lost 176 young men and women last year who proudly answered the call to service.

Today we have more than 3,000 wounded warrior Airmen enrolled in our recovery care programs; 978 of those Airmen are still serving on active duty.

Our Airmen clearly remain dedicated and committed to completing the mission around the world. They ask for your leadership to ensure they are able to continue that mission in the future.

I bring some great Airmen with me today that serve alongside with me. First and foremost, my wife of nearly 29 years, an Airman herself, 26 years on active duty, a retired Airman. I also bring with me the command chief of the Air Force Reserve Command, the command chief of the Air National Guard, and my senior public affairs advisor to the chief master in the Air Force.

These Airmen represent all 690,000 of those Airmen and their families, dedicated and committed to doing what our nation has to do, fully prepared to adapt and adjust to new normals in our military. But we can never, ever lose sight of the fact that without them and their families and without their dedication and commitment to service we will not remain the world's greatest Air Force.

So I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The information follows:]



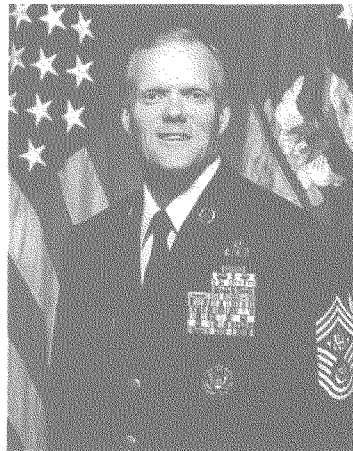
BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE JAMES A. CODY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public, and to those in all levels of government. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force. Chief Cody is the 17th chief master sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.



Chief Cody entered the Air Force in November 1984. He graduated from the air traffic control specialist course at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., in May 1985. His background includes various duties in air traffic control at the unit and major-command levels. Throughout his career, he has filled a myriad of roles including additional-duty First Sergeant and Directorate Superintendent. His assignments include bases in New Hampshire, California, Virginia and Florida. The chief also served overseas in Germany, South Korea, Turkey, and deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom.

Prior to assuming his current position, he served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas.

EDUCATION

1987 Noncommissioned Officer Preparatory School, Kapaun AS, Germany
 1989 Air Force Communications Command Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School, Keesler AFB, Miss.
 1993 Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
 1995 USAFE Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Kapaun AS, Germany
 1997 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
 1998 Associate of Applied Science degree in airway science, Community College of the Air Force
 2001 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2005 Chief's Leadership Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2005 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, San Diego, Calif.
 2006 Gettysburg Leadership Experience, Gettysburg, Pa.
 2008 Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Correspondence Course
 2008 AFSO 21 Executive Leadership Course, Disney Institute, Orlando, Fla.

2009 Keystone, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
 2010 COMAFFOR Senior Staff Course, USAF Expeditionary Center, N.J.
 2010 USAF Enterprise Management Seminar, Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
 2012 Bachelor of Science degree in business administration, Trident University International, Cypress, Calif.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. November 1984 - January 1985, Student, Basic Military Training, Lackland AFB, Texas
2. January 1985 - June 1985, Student, Technical Training School, Keesler AFB, Miss.
3. June 1985 - June 1988, Air Traffic Controller, 1964th Communications Group, Ramstein AB, Germany
4. June 1988 - January 1991, ATC Watch Supervisor, 1916th Communications Squadron, Pease AFB, N.H.
5. January 1991 - May 1993, ATC Watch Supervisor, 30th Operational Support Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
6. May 1993 - May 1994, ATC Watch Supervisor, 51st OSS, Osan AB, South Korea
7. June 1994 - June 1996, Superintendent, Airfield Operations Training, 39th OSS, Incirlik AB, Turkey
8. June 1996 - March 2000, Superintendent, Airfield Operations, Readiness/Training, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
9. March 2000 - May 2003, Chief Tower Controller, additional duty 1st Sgt, 6th OSS, MacDill AFB, Fla. (April 2002 - July 2002, Superintendent, Combat Airspace Management Cell, Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
10. June 2003 - July 2005, Superintendent, Directorate of Air and Space Operations and ATC Functional Manager, HQ ACC, Langley AFB, Va.
11. July 2005 - August 2007, Command Chief, 15th Expeditionary Mobility Task Force, Travis AFB, Calif.
12. August 2007 - July 2008, Command Chief, 6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill AFB, Fla.
13. July 2008 - September 2010, Command Chief, 18th Air Force, Scott AFB, Ill.
14. September 2010 - January 2013, Command Chief, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas
15. January 2013 - present, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit
 Meritorious Service Medal with seven oak leaf clusters
 Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
 Air Force Achievement Medal with five oak leaf clusters
 Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

1994 39th Wing NCO of the Year
 1995 John L. Levitow Award, NCO Academy
 1995 USAFE ATC Training Achievement Award
 1995 STEP promotion to Master Sergeant
 1997 ACC Director of Air and Space Operations SNCO of the Year
 2001 Distinguished Graduate, SNCO Academy
 2001 AMC Air Traffic Control Enlisted Manager of the Year
 2001 Tampa Bay Military Citizen of the Year
 2001 Air Mobility Command SNCO of the Year

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PROMOTION

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force January 2013

(Current as of January 2013)

United States Air Force



Presentation

Before the House Appropriations Committee,
Subcommittee on Military Construction and
Veterans Affairs

Quality of Life in the Military

Witness Statement of
CMSAF James A. Cody
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

February 26, 2014

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

Introduction

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued support and commitment to the quality of life in our military. It is my absolute honor to be here today with my fellow service senior enlisted advisors as we represent the fine men and women who serve our great nation. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share with you the concerns of 690,000 Total Force Airmen and their families.

We know the support of this subcommittee is absolutely vital to our continued success around the globe. We rely on your efforts, actions, and legislation to protect and support our service members' and their families' entitlements and benefits. The continued support and commitment you have for our veterans' is recognized and appreciated by all those who serve in our military, past and present. We also appreciate the visits House members have made to support our Airmen in the field and our Wounded Warriors in health care facilities.

Force Management

The Air Force faces a significant challenge over the next several years as we move toward a new normal of operational tempo and fiscal constraints. We will need to significantly reduce the size of the Air Force by up to 25,000 Airmen who have proudly dedicated their lives in service to our great nation. To reach these numbers, we are instituting multiple voluntary and involuntary programs that have been structured in a logical, deliberate and responsible manner, with voluntary programs available first. These programs are not quick fixes, but rather a tailored effort comprised of many initiatives aimed at managing the force along a continuum of service. These actions are necessary to facilitate critical modernization and restore force readiness. The

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

capabilities and credibility of our Air Force to meet our core missions are essential to national defense and these efforts support that end.

We recognize how difficult these actions are on our Airmen and the importance of transparency during this process. Air Force senior leaders announced the programs as early as possible to ensure Airmen and their families had time to plan for their future. Every Airman has been individually notified of their vulnerability for voluntary and involuntary force management programs. We also understand the importance of communication and support for our Airmen and their families. Through a deliberate communication effort, supervisors down to the unit level understand they must stay well versed on the different force management initiatives and how they affect their team. We are committed to sitting down with each individual Airman to talk through options and refer them to support agencies as appropriate. As we push forward through the turbulent road ahead, our commitment to our fellow Airmen will be resolute and the bond that holds us together.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Last summer, the Air Force established a multi-functional Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office--a directorate-level organization, led by a general officer whom reports directly to the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. This office leads a robust focus on sexual assault prevention, advocacy, investigation, accountability and assessment and enables the Air Force to better synchronize with the Department of Defense lines of effort. As a result, the Air Force has been able to provide broader, more comprehensive victim support. The Air Force has also benchmarked a Special Victim's Counsel Program. It is through this program that victims of sexual assault have personal, direct access to an attorney representing only their interests in

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

the judicial process as well as advocating for them in any collateral discipline issues and assisting them in any case issues whenever necessary. Additionally, “Every Airman Counts” is an initiative that our Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, General Larry O. Spencer launched as a forum to promote Airman-to-Airman dialogue related to Sexual Assault that also provides the opportunity for Airmen to provide suggestions to senior leaders. Furthermore, the Air Force hired and trained Air Force Office of Special Investigations agents for the exclusive purpose of investigating sexual assaults. Our Air Force Chief of Staff, General Mark A. Welsh III, continues to make it crystal clear that sexual assaults have no place in the Air Force. Air Force commanders must initiate involuntary administrative discharge processing for any Airman (officer or enlisted) who is convicted of a qualifying sexual assault offense. The Air Force team has already conducted focus groups with 1,400 Airmen, including 30 sexual assault survivors, male and female, at 14 installations worldwide and obtained valuable insight from the junior Airmen, all levels of leadership, and survivors of sexual assault. Lastly, the Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office works jointly with its Department of Defense counterparts to streamline future survey efforts, to include a 100 percent transition to the Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey.

Recruiting and Retention

The Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) has successfully met All-Volunteer Force requirements for the past 14 years and is currently positioned to meet FY14 requirements. As a result, AFRS has placed the right Airmen into the right jobs and at the right time to fill the Initial Skills Training pipeline with the number of Airmen necessary to meet career field requirements across the Air Force. Despite a shrinking pool of age-qualified youth, a decreased propensity to

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

serve in the military and reduced budgets, we continue to recruit the best and brightest our nation has to offer. Currently, 99 percent of our recruits are high school diploma graduates and 18 percent have at least 15-semester hours of college. This punctuates the Air Force commitment to produce a high-quality enlisted corps capable of meeting the challenges of today, and tomorrow.

Currently we are on track to meet Total Force enlisted accession goals for the Active Duty, Reserve, and Air National Guard components. This fiscal year, over 11,000 of America's young men and women have completed or are currently attending Air Force Basic Military Training (BMT). Additionally, there are approximately 9,000 recruits already contracted to attend BMT this fiscal year.

During these unprecedented budgetary times, it is imperative we continue to invest in programs that attract the high-quality applicants the Air Force requires to meet evolving career field needs. Our ability to meet our recruitment goals and sustain the quality enlisted corps we require depends on Air Force Quality of Life programs and initiatives.

As we work through force management objectives to balance our force, it is crucial we remain sensitive to the impact this has on recruiting. A critical component of our recruiting success is built on a foundation of strong community relationships that take years to cultivate. Accession cuts and forced separations threaten to undermine these relationships by suggesting to these communities that we are no longer hiring or that we no longer value the service of their sons and daughters. We will continue to work with these communities and strengthen our relationship to ensure we maintain the quality all volunteer force into the future.

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

Quality of Service

We sincerely appreciate continued congressional support and funding for quality of service initiatives. We believe these to be an overwhelming factor in the decision Airmen and their families make to continue serving our nation. We place a great deal of importance on the sense of community in and around our bases. We focus on four main areas: health and wellness; Airmen and family support; education, development, and employment; and Airmen and family housing.

Health and Wellness:

Assistance to Severely Injured Service Members

Our Airmen and their families are our highest priority; I am proud and humbled by the sacrifices they willingly make day in and day out to serve our nation. I find myself simply in awe of our combat wounded, especially their resilience and perseverance when the effects of war forever alter their lives. They are proud to serve the country they love and proud to be a part of the United States Air Force. Therefore we match their commitment through a lifelong promise to provide them the care and support they need, and so rightfully deserve.

We have built a program of care and support for our combat wounded. We also realize our seriously injured and ill Airmen and their families face many of the same challenges as our combat wounded and have many of the same needs. They have to endure the recovery, persevere through their rehabilitation and face the possibility of a transition out of the Air Force...the full continuum of care. So we have embraced our responsibility to the entire combat wounded and seriously ill and injured population through our Recovery Care Program.

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

By strategically placing Recovery Care Coordinators in 43 locations around the world, we provide face-to-face, individualized service and support to our Airmen and their families when and where they need it. This personalized effort gives a face to our commitment and an advocate to help our wounded, ill and injured navigate the complex road to recovery and achieve personal and professional goals. Our commitment is unwavering whether our wounded, ill, or injured Airmen is returning to active service or transitioning to civilian life. The Recovery Care Coordinators also support the families and caregivers of our Airmen by identifying needs, connecting with support groups, and working to ease the burden brought on by their current circumstance.

Along with our Recovery Care Coordinators, we provide Non-Medical Care Managers who act as fiduciary agents on behalf of the recovering Airman and as advocates for the recovering Airman and his or her family with other government and non-governmental agencies. They work with Recovery Care Coordinators, medical care providers, chaplains, commanders and other providers as a single Recovery Team to meet the needs of our wounded, ill and injured and their families.

We've learned many lessons over the course of this war, perhaps none more important than the support we must provide to our Airmen when they are faced with a long recovery and an uphill climb to get the benefits and support they have earned. We must not fail them; we cannot fail them.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

As might be expected with fewer deployments, the Air Force has seen a slight drop in newly diagnosed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) cases between 2011 and 2012. Our

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

data is not yet complete from 2013, but we expect the slight reductions to continue. Our overall rate has remained relatively low, and our current rate for newly diagnosed PTSD is under 0.4 percent. I am proud to say that historically we have retained approximately 75 percent of our Airmen diagnosed with PTSD.

The Air Force remains committed to helping our Airmen through improving early symptom recognition and offering evidence-based treatments. We continue to screen our Airmen for PTSD symptoms at set points in the deployment cycle, to include screening through Pre- and Post-Deployment Health Assessment and Reassessment, and provide training to help counter the stressors on our Airmen with each deployment. Our Airmen in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Security Forces, Medical, and Transportation career fields are at higher risk of developing PTSD and receive additional education and training on how to recognize symptoms of PTSD along with available treatment and supportive resources. The Deployment Transition Center (DTC), Ramstein Air Base, Germany, continues to support Airmen in our high-risk career fields with two days of training and time for reconstitution before returning home. A 2010 study showed Airmen who participated in the DTC reported at least a 6 percent lower rate of post-traumatic symptoms, problematic alcohol use and interpersonal conflict after having attended the program as compared to a control-group of deployed Airmen who did not participate. Two follow on studies are being conducted to measure the continued effectiveness of the DTC. We continue to collaborate with the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to advance research on prevention and treatment of combat related injuries, including PTSD.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) rates in the Air Force remain very low. However, we are expanding our efforts to ensure our Airmen seek medical care for mild traumatic brain injury, or concussion, in any setting. The vast majority of TBI cases in the Air Force are from non-deployment related injuries. We identify deployed individuals with TBI symptoms upon return home through the Post Deployment Health Assessment and Reassessment, with referral as appropriate. The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury and Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center continue to serve as valuable partners in facilitating a combined effort between all services, the Department of Veterans Affairs and civilian subject matter experts to develop clinical practice guidelines for our primary care providers. Our efforts are closely coordinated with the other Services through our TBI Quad Service Working Group to make sure we incorporate the latest in TBI research into clinical practice. The National Intrepid Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury serves as a premier referral center for those deployment-related cases with more significant symptoms.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention remains a high priority for Air Force leadership at every level. Our prevention program is an integrated network of measures that focuses on reducing suicide through community support, education, early identification and treatment of those at risk. The program was designed with 11 overlapping elements to enhance the capacity of the Air Force to recognize and respond to Airmen in distress. We are encouraged that the rate of suicides has

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

been declining, however, we know one loss is too many, which drives us to place significant focus and resources toward eliminating suicides in our force.

We are committed to strengthening and improving our program. Some recent suicide prevention initiatives include live training for all installation suicide prevention program managers and Department of Defense Suicide Event Report Point of Contacts, release of the revised Air Force Guide to Suicide Risk Assessment, Management, and Treatment for mental health providers and staff, and efforts to expand the Air Force's strategic communication plan for suicide prevention and promoting the Wingman Culture.

Health Promotion

The Air Force is committed to promoting a healthy, fit, resilient, and productive force. Our Health Promotion target areas include Tobacco Free Living, Nutritional Fitness, Physical Activity, and Healthy Weight. Consistent with our war-fighting mission, our Airmen have rates of obesity and physical activity that compare quite favorably with the civilian population. Smoking has seen a steady decline; our current smoking prevalence of 14 percent is lower than the national average of 18 percent. In the current fiscal climate, we are committed to implementing low-cost, high-reach policy and environmental interventions that promote healthy living as the default choice and social norm.

Child and Youth Development Programs

The Air Force has continued our commitment to deliver readily available, affordable, and quality childcare programs for our Airmen and their families. These programs ensure our Airmen are able to focus on the mission while knowing their youngest family members are cared

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

for through quality Child & Youth programs. In FY 13 we delivered high quality child care programs to 58,000 children.

In addition to brick and mortar facilities, our Air Force Expanded Child Care program provides assistance in a home-based setting for Airmen who need care during unusual shifts, extended duty hours and drill weekends. This type of care is mission-critical particularly in those locations where community-based care options are both few and costly. Through programs like Extended Duty Care, Missile Care, Supplemental Care, and Returning Home Care, the Air Force is able to provide a wide range of support to our active and reserve component families. We expanded this capability in FY 13 by implementing new childcare programs to assist wounded warriors, families of the fallen and those with unique needs due to medical circumstances.

Additionally, our Air Force Youth Programs have taken a comprehensive approach to resiliency by integrating elements of resilience concepts throughout the experiences we provide to youth. We recognize the importance of providing meaningful opportunities during the out-of-school hours which can be peak times for “at risk” behavior, particularly in light of reduced school district and community service budgets. Our Youth Programs had 642,000 enrollments in a variety of fitness and health, deployment support, resiliency building, academic enrichment and community service activities offered to Total Force youth around the world. The Air Force Teen Council continues to offer advocacy opportunities and leadership skills while helping our teens strengthen their personal resiliency and contribute to the larger Air Force community. The newly implemented quarterly Teen Movement Projects have created a network of involved teens at each installation. New for 2013, our Youth Program members participated in the first ever

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

Military Youth of the Year competition, an initiative in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Showcasing the stellar achievements of military teens around the world, Air Force teens were awarded an astonishing five out of six regional awards garnering a combined total of more than \$70,000 in Military Youth of the Year scholarships. In addition, through another key partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 4-H Youth Development Program, over 1,000 Air Force youth participated in the 2013 National Youth Science Day event and we were able to reach 14,000 additional youth through partnership with 4-H county extension agents.

Airman Education Opportunities

The Air Force has the most educated enlisted force in the world. Every Airman entering service is automatically enrolled in an associate of applied science degree program through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). Since April 25, 1977, CCAF has awarded more than 427,000 degrees that correspond to each member's career field. Many view the CCAF degree as the start of their path toward higher education. Currently, more than 22,000 enlisted Airmen have bachelor's degrees or higher and 26 have earned a doctorate degree.

Air University's Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative is helping Airmen who have completed CCAF degrees apply those credits toward a bachelor's degree. This program has grown to encompass 55 civilian university partners offering 200 bachelor's degree programs. Over 23,000 Airmen have participated and 1,735 bachelor's degrees have been awarded through this program alone. Additionally, 46 of these graduates have become commissioned officers.

We are also focused on professional credentialing to broaden the development of our Airmen. The Airframe and Power-Plant certification program is one of four credentialing

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

programs that codifies the training and experience for over 75,000 aircraft maintainers, enabling them to earn the Federal Aviation Administration's mechanic certification.

Finally, CCAF is currently engaged in developing credentialing pilot programs and policies that support the White House Veteran Employment and Credentialing Initiative and the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 558 mandate.

We are convinced that opportunities like these directly increase Air Force recruitment and retention as well as enhance our Airmen's professional capabilities. Our focused efforts result in highly capable Airmen ready to contribute to our nation's defense and equipped for professional life outside of the Air Force. We continue to explore new programs that enhance our ability to educate the force, being keenly aware of the associated costs and need to seek efficiencies.

Airman and Family Readiness

We continue to foster better communication to family members through our Key Spouse Program. The program designates one volunteer family member in each unit to disseminate information from installation leaders to other unit family members. This builds a greater sense of community, especially when families are separated by deployments.

We continue to make steady progress in support of Air Force dependents attending public, private, DoD Dependent, home, and virtual schools. Civilian (or Military designee) school liaisons and staff at our Airman & Family Readiness Centers provide support to base leaders and families through advocacy with local and state school administration and school boards.

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

Forty-six states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation to establish an Interstate Compact on educational opportunity for military children in state and local school districts. The Interstate Compact ensures military children are not negatively impacted in school by their families' service to the nation. It provides educational solutions on class placement, records transfer, graduation requirements, immunizations, and exit testing, and allows late entry to extra-curricular activities and sports teams. The work done to ensure we don't penalize our families as they move around the world is an important quality of life factor for our Airmen and their families.

About 50 percent of Air Force spouses seek employment with each military move, making spouse employment a consistent challenge. In many cases spouse employment constitutes almost half of an Air Force family's income. It is no surprise that Airmen report this as their most pressing quality of life concern. Our Airmen have benefited from your support and White House efforts to help military spouses enjoy consistent and productive careers despite relatively frequent relocation.

Unemployment compensation for spouses of service members continues to be critical to Air Force families. Support for unemployment compensation acknowledges military spouses need reasonable time and resources necessary to find suitable employment or meet licensing or credentialing requirements each time they move. We look forward to all states properly compensating spouses that move because of their military obligation.

Our Exceptional Family Member Program provides targeted assistance to Airmen who have family members with special needs. In FY13, we continued strengthening this program to provide our families with access to greater resources that will assist them in effectively balancing

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

mission requirements with family care responsibilities. We have 35 full-time family support coordinators at Air Force installations with original high numbers of EFM of 175 or higher. In FY11, Respite Child Care was launched at seven locations to provide support to families with special needs. The program is now in 64 locations and has provided over 37,000 hours of skilled respite care allowing families a break from the stressors of caring for a family member with special needs. Through the generous support of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 100 accessible childcare playgrounds and community nature parks are in various stages of design and construction and will support family members with special needs.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA)

The AAFES remains focused on their longstanding mission of delivering quality goods and services at competitively low prices, and generating earnings that provide a dividend to support Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs. AAFES' first duty is to provide value, service and support to authorized patrons, but we must never forget the unique and important role within the military departments in which they serve. AAFES returns more than 60 percent of earnings to support Army and Air Force MWR programs and reinvests the remaining dollars to ensure shopping facilities are safe, eco-friendly and modernized. In the past ten years, AAFES has contributed more than \$2.4 billion to support Quality of Life programs such as youth programs, arts and crafts, aquatic centers, golf courses, bowling centers and more.

AAFES' greatest honor continues to be serving those who serve. AAFES provides services that help Airmen, Soldiers and military families thrive, particularly during budgetary challenges. Annually, the organization provides a cost-savings benefit of \$6,600 per Airman, and

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

a contribution of \$224 per Airman for MWR programs and facilities. AAFES employs over 40,000 associates; 36 percent have a military connection, including Wounded Warriors and Veterans, and 24 percent are military spouses and family members. To keep the forces “mission ready,” AAFES operates facilities in 33 countries, 13 of which support contingency operations.

DeCA shoppers save an average of more than 30.5 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices. A family of four shopping regularly can save more than \$4,200 on their total annual grocery bill. Single service members can save \$1,500 a year. The customer satisfaction index commissary score of 82 exceeded the commercial supermarket of 77. Military related employees make up 64 percent of the DeCA workforce: military spouses 28 percent, dependents nine percent, retirees 12 percent, Guard and Reserve two percent, and other veterans 13 percent. DeCA is committed to evolving the organization to find ways to reduce operating costs. The value our Airmen, their families, and our veterans place on commissaries should not be understated; many junior enlisted Airmen and fixed income retirees rely on these savings for basic sustainment.

Housing

Quality unaccompanied and family housing ensures our Airmen and families have a strong supporting foundation. We are providing this through military construction (MILCON) and housing privatization. In 2013, we made great progress in privatizing more than 99 percent of housing at each of our Air Force installations in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Air Force has currently privatized over 53,000 housing units at 63 installations. Housing privatization continues to transform our installations and create efficient, modern communities where our Air Force families choose to live. It allows us to deliver high quality

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

homes to our members quicker than ever before, and at significant savings to the taxpayer. We have eliminated over 30,000 inadequate homes since the program started in 1998, with another 6,600 privatized homes to be replaced or renovated in the next five years. We also continue to invest in sustaining and modernizing government-owned housing overseas. We are thankful that Congress approved \$76.4 million this year to upgrade housing infrastructure at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, and to upgrade infrastructure and improve family housing units at Misawa Air Base, Japan. Another \$389 million is programmed this year for leases, family housing operations and maintenance for government-owned homes at our overseas installations, and for privatized housing oversight.

We are also deeply committed to providing quality dormitories for our unaccompanied Airmen. Our focus remains on providing an environment of care, development, and mentorship for our Airmen. Our dormitory campuses are not just a place to sleep; they are a place for young Airmen to adjust to military life and build a strong sense of community. As with family housing, we are making great strides to eliminate inadequate dormitories from our inventory of 939 dormitories. This year, we will invest \$57 million to build new dormitories at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada and Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. After these investments, the Air Force will still have 62 remaining dormitories in need of improvement or replacement.

We thank you for your continued support that allows the Air Force to sustain investment in these areas in order to provide thriving housing and dormitory communities, and more importantly, to take care of our valued Airmen and families.

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

Military Construction

For several years, the Air Force has chosen to take risk in infrastructure in order to invest in modernization efforts. We continue to prioritize our program to cover our most critical MILCON requirements to enable core Air Force capabilities and take care of our people that make the mission possible. In this fiscal environment, we expect our MILCON program to focus on our most critical, minimum essential requirements.

Since 2000, and with the generous support of Congress, the Air Force funded 124 military construction projects totaling \$834 million for child development centers and fitness centers. This represents a significant investment to improve readiness and the quality of life for our Airmen, but requirements still remain. Again, the continued support of this subcommittee is vital to the success of these MILCON programs supporting our Airmen and their families.

Conclusion

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to represent the incredible Airmen and their families through this testimony. This past year has been extremely stressful on those serving in our Air Force. All members - Active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Civilian Airmen - have endured significant uncertainty and churn with respect to mission capability, compensation, and what it means to serve in our Air Force. The budget challenges we face have not been lost on our force, and you would be proud to know their first concern is how to accomplish the mission. We've stood down flying squadrons, furloughed civilians, and seen our readiness levels significantly decline. Our Airmen are truly doing amazing work around the world every day, from delivering relief to typhoon stricken regions in the Philippines to supporting combatant

Quality of Life in the Military

February 26, 2014

commanders from all corners of the globe. They continue to serve honorably and proudly in defense of our nation.

Our Air Force families are also a critical component to our success. These men and women serve alongside the service member by taking care of the home front while we employ and enable airpower around the world. They stand strong while loved ones deploy to war zones in foreign countries. Their faith and support is critical to our Airmen and enable the focus and dedication our complex missions require. Thank you again for your continued support for our brave Airmen and their supportive families.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, sir. We really appreciate your service to the country and thank you. All of us on this Committee are especially sensitive to the stress that you mentioned that has been caused to our men and women in uniform by the budget uncertainty, by the stress that the environment of shortages of funds have made on the entire federal government, but especially to our men and women in uniform.

And I think it is also vitally important for us all to remember the extraordinary sacrifice that you all have made. We honor and respect the over 5,000 young men and women who have lost their lives in service to this country, and it is absolutely vital that—and I know everyone on this Committee shares a commitment to do everything in our power to make sure that we give you whatever you need to ensure their peace of mind and the comfort and quality of life that they have to have in order to do their job and maintain that unit morale that Master Chief Stevens referred to.

It is, as I have in other hearings—for those of you who have been here before, I always like to start with an open-ended question, then turn it over to my colleagues on the subcommittee, to talk to us about in your personal opinion your top three priorities in your own mind, based on your own experience, that we on the subcommittee should focus on as we prepare the funding levels for this year's bill.

QUALITY OF LIFE PRIORITIES

And I hope you will also, if I could say very quickly, pass on to your—if you could please communicate to the men and women under your command that we are this year going to—we are absolutely guaranteed going to get an appropriations bill; there is no worry about a Continuing Resolution or a government shutdown. Thank goodness, we have got a budget agreement, so there certainly is, at least for this year, some certainty in that we really will get a bill. They don't need to worry about that.

But when it comes to, in your mind, the top three priorities we need to make sure that are included in that bill, what would those be, Sergeant Major Chandler?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well thanks, sir. I think for me the top three priorities really have to do with recruiting, retaining, and then transitioning soldiers with dignity and respect as they move on to the next phase of their life.

Recruiting in the Army right now is a challenge as we move forward into the future. We are making our recruiting numbers, but we see a steady decline in the amount of 17- to 24-year-olds across the country who meet the physical, mental, medical, and moral requirements that we have as a service, and that applies to all of the services.

And our challenge is, as we continue to have less and less people—and I will give you a statistic right now: 23 out of 100 17- to 24-year-olds are eligible to join the service—that number continues to decline as we move forward, and our challenges are in physical conditioning—obesity—and also in medical issues that they may have had as pre-conditions—preexisting conditions before they came.

Second is retaining the best-qualified people as we transition to reducing the size of the Army. We will still look for the best-qualified folks and, you know, our commanders do a good job of ensuring that the people that we want to retain are those that have a holistic, whole-soldier view of not only their ability in combat but their ability off-duty, their commitment to the Army and its programs, and their character. And we do a great job, I think, of assessing to make sure we retain the best people.

And finally, to make sure that we have soldiers that leave the service proud of what they have done and committed to be a part of the community that they are going to move to once they leave the service. The VOW Act I think has really made us focus on our processes and procedures, and I am very comfortable with where we are at this time, sir.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you, thank you very much—when you meet and talk to them at the equivalent of what we do with town hall meetings—

Master Chief STEVENS. Sure. We do town halls, we call them all-hands calls, and it is a great opportunity to hear from our sailors, especially our sailors out in the fleet, on what their concerns are. And what concerns me mostly is those things that place a stress on the force or could potentially place a stress on the force, and that is potential pay and compensation, family programs and support services, and predictability of deployments.

With pay and compensation, I would share with you that right now today as we sit here our servicemembers are fairly satisfied with the pay and compensation that they receive. What we need to be careful about is, as we slow growth in pay and compensation, that we don't go too far, because they will let us know one way or another. Either they will let us know with their voices or they will let us know with their feet.

So we have to monitor that and be careful about that, and the support that this committee has given us over the last decade-plus has been tremendous, and our sailors truly do appreciate it. But we can never take our eye off the ball because I think if we take our eye off the ball, before you know it you have a problem that you are trying to solve.

Family programs and support services: The ones that we have in place now are good. They are in place and they are supporting their intended purpose. Our families are very grateful for those.

But again, as we face these budgetary challenges we have to be careful that we don't start backing away from or reducing the services that all of you have worked so hard over the last, you know, 10 or 15 years to put in place. So we are concerned about those—child development, fitness centers, deployment for our spouses, health care, mental health counseling. All those things help us out a great deal because, as you well know, the Navy spends a great deal of its time deployed, and the stress that it places on families and our sailors is tremendous, and these programs that are in place help them deal with that stress and enable them to continue what they do for an entire career.

Predictability of deployments is something that our sailors are always concerned about. When I talk to them and they know that they are going to go on a 9- or a 10-month deployment, they don't

complain about that. What concerns them is when we send them on a deployment and we not—we are not sure when they are coming back, or we tell them just before they deploy that they are going to—their deployment has gone from 6 months to 8 months.

We don't do that because of planning purposes or because there is, you know, there is no other alternative. We do that because the world dictates it to us, and when you only have so much stuff to do so many things with, what ends up happening is you do more with the stuff that you have.

And so I know this committee isn't directly tied to resourcing our ships and airplanes and submarines, but I just wanted you to be aware that that is a stressor on the fleet and that predictability for deployments is very important to them.

Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you, sir. An essential part of what we are working on together, particularly the members of this subcommittee, I know, and the Congress as a whole, is finding a way to alleviate those overall pressures, because it is—we are almost at a tipping point if we don't deal with the looming bankruptcy of Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, the crushing pressure that is putting on state taxpayers, the debt, the deficit, the interest on the national debt. It is just going to devour us, and it is impacting you.

At least for this year, thank goodness, we have got a budget agreement, so there is some stability and predictability when it comes to this year. There will be no continuing resolution or government shutdown.

And I think it is also really important to note, if I could very quickly before we move to your comments, Sergeant Major Barrett, that we are—if you could also communicate to your men and women that are under your command that the Secretary of Defense may have made some recommendations with the budget submission. Those are just recommendations but the Congress is going to have the final word on that—the Appropriations Committee, the Congress as a whole and I want to point out also that the National Defense Authorization Act has specified by statute a level of 520,000 for the Army, so please communicate to the men and women under your command that what they may see on television from the Secretary of Defense is simply a recommendation and that final word will be up to Congress and how devoted we are to them.

And if I could, Sergeant Major Barrett, as you talk to your men and women in town hall meetings, what are the top three concerns that you hear from them that we should be focused on as we prepare our bill this year, sir?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Thank you, sir. The Marine Corps is absolutely determined to keeping faith with our Marines and families, and as Sergeant Major Chandler and Master Chief Petty Officer Stevens have said, those also are priorities of ours, so he is only helping me to throw a few more into the pot.

But the wounded, ill, and injured, ensuring that they receive all the support that they can get so that they continue to live productive lives and/or be able to stay in the fight. Our transition readiness, to ensure that all of our Marines that have selflessly served and sacrificed during their time, whether they got out after one contract or they have taken it to retirement, that we provide them

with all the tools that we can possibly give them to ensure their success when they take off the cloth of this nation.

Third is the behavioral health programs and ensuring that we are able to help those families and those Marines to tackle challenges and those difficult issues. And when we talk to Marines, God bless them because that spirit is just burning bright.

You know what is on their minds? They want to know where we are going next and they want to know whose neck do we need to put a boot into. It always pops up.

Next they want to know, with the impacts and the challenges of these—this austere fiscal environment, they want to know that our training and our professional military education is not going to be impacted and they want to know what new toys we can put in their hands—equipment to take it to the enemy. That is what is really on the minds of the Marines.

But for me, as I look out over the force, those things that are important, those real, true quality of life things—that wounded, ill, and injured, taking care of them to the—till they decide what they want to do; transitioning—ensuring that we have provided them for success; and behavioral health problems, to tackle any of those challenges.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you, very much.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Thank you, Chairman.

So it is always tough to go at the end, right, because we talk about a lot of the same things that affect the men and women that serve and their families. It is consistent.

But what I would say is although I appreciate—and I think we all appreciate—the budget agreement that takes us two years down the road, sequestration is still the law and our Airmen are very in tune with that, and they have lived through something that was reality, and it had a dire effect on their ability to do their job. So as much as compensation is clearly one of the very top one or two questions that we will receive when we go out there and what is going to happen with that.

And I think most of them can appreciate we have to make some adjustments and we can have that conversation with you, it is also fair to put on the record that they are not being overcompensated for what they do. They have earned everything that they are entitled to today.

How we slow that and maintain that over time is the appropriate discussion to have, but to think for a moment that they haven't earned what they are receiving today would be somewhat disrespectful to their sacrifice and service and that of their family.

So when you think about how we get through the next 2 years and deal with that reality, but also as we plan for the military of the future, determine what this new normal is, they are concerned about their training and the equipping of that. They are all about doing what they do for our nation, and that means it takes training, it takes equipment to do that, and the right type of training and equipment.

And we have seen over the last year that readiness decline. And again, these next two years will help us get back after that. I

mean, we will bring it back up. But there is still that date looming out there for them, and they recognize that. They really do.

It is the idea of work-life balance. So depending on what decisions are finalized and what end strengths do look like, they will adjust. They have to adjust in some way, shape, or form, or the budgets have to grow to stay the size that we are. It is a math problem.

What our nation asks them to do and how reasonable that is in maintaining an appropriate work-life balance, where they can have a family and have this as a career and a profession becomes a predominant discussion, because we have asked so much, certainly over the last 12-plus years—nearly 13 years.

But I do think it is important to note that we have been in that region for 20-plus years. Our United States Air Force has been executing in that area for 20-plus years. That has been a significant effort by the men and women that serve.

Mr. CULBERSON [continuing]. My good friend, Mr. Bishop from Georgia.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I thank you all for your testimony.

I want to just indicate that I am very concerned about the employment issues that are facing spouses, particularly due to the frequent rotation of servicemembers. So I would like to ask you gentlemen, starting with the Army, what initiatives have been put in place, including civilian opportunities, that assist with the employment for military spouses during the relocation process.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Yes, sir. So we have, I think, actually leveraged some things with the White House, specifically Joining Forces, and Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden's initiatives to look at credentialing opportunities and transportability between states. As recently as just a few months ago, I believe we have 35 states now that have agreed to accept the transportability of credentials for school teachers and other folks to be able to move, which is very well and good.

We still have a challenge with some of those professional services, like marketing professionals and so on, because they look for a more long-term, you know, commitment from a person. My wife specifically is a marketing professional, has been in the professional services for about 26 years, and she consistently is challenged with that. I think that is still a work in progress.

I think we have done very well for our entry-level employees and junior spouses with opportunities at the local level for them to be able to not only seek employment, possibly for the first time, but actually to engage in partnerships with organizations like Home Depot and Lowe's and Target and Walmart to be able to move their job from one location to another.

So this idea of transportability, I think, is actually starting to catch on, and I do believe a big part of it has actually been the work of the White House and Joining Forces. Within the Army, we have got programs that are at our Army Community Services to be able to help our spouses to seek that entrance-level or entry position.

So I think we are actually on a pretty good slope right now. I think momentum is important, and that if we are able to sustain momentum it is going to be institutionalized, and I think that will be very important for us.

Master Chief STEVENS. Sergeant Major Chandler talked about many of the things outside of the Navy that we are doing—that we are involved in, as well, with the White House and senior government. Within the Navy specifically, we have a very robust program to provide support for our spouses. I like to say that we try to set the conditions for them to be successful by providing them with training on things like resume-writing, job interview skills, providing them with information on companies in the local area that are hiring and specifically looking to hire spouses.

It is a really good program that our Fleet and Family Support Services run underneath the Commander, Naval Installations Command. As a matter of fact, there is an app—we have—our Commander, Naval Installations Command has an app and I was looking at it on my iPad yesterday, and one of the things on there is spouse employment, and when I tapped on that spouse employment, it gave me a long list of things that our spouses can be involved in and should consider with regards to spouse employment and who they need to see and seek out to help in this process.

I am satisfied where we are at but not overly satisfied. We certainly need to continue to press this issue because it is very important for our spouses. Thank you.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Barrett.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Thank you, sir.

Families can relocate up to six to nine times just between kindergarten to the 12th grade academic years, so starting and stopping jobs unfortunately is a reality in our business and in the military. And in the Marine Corps we have the Family Member Employment Assistance Program, which provides, a lot like what the master chief just said, provides coaching and training in interview techniques, to resume-writing, to federal application process, to salary negotiations, to how to appropriately dress, to one-on-one career counseling, to training and volunteer opportunities. And over this past year we have had 12,800 visits by our military spouses and our dependents for workshops, trainings, and seminars to help to prepare them to set them up for success, and the Marine Corps has held 164 career fairs across the Corps.

On top of what Sergeant Major Chandler already mentioned with the Joining Forces Initiative from the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has also focused on Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program, which manages programs like the Military Spouse Employment Program, which is one of those transportable—transportable opportunities.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you.

Mr. Cody.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. So to kind of build on what has already been stated, the Air Force is fully integrated with the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program, and that is certainly seeing some great benefit when you think as of June 2013 we had 1.6 million people that have benefitted from that program. That does not replace—just as the other Services do, we have pro-

grams within our Airmen and Family Readiness Center where we connect our spouses with local opportunities as well as resume-writing and such of where they can transfer some of their previous skills and whatnot.

But it is still a major challenge, and, you know, Athena would tell you, as she spends a lot of time with the spouses, this is a concern because while these things exist, there are far more spouses than there are opportunities, and they are going to kind of pick up and move at some pretty unopportune times in their careers.

And what I think we are struggling with in the Air Force now, and I would submit that the other Services probably have this same challenge, is some of our spouses are getting to the point in their careers where they are not going to make the move. You know, they are looking at the fact that eventually their service-member is going to have to transition, and now they are at a point where they really can't take those pauses in their careers or interruptions, and we are seeing more and more families split—not split in the sense of they are not a family anymore, they are just going to maintain two households, and it is very challenging and I think that is a concern that we have to continue to keep visible, and we certainly appreciate the support of this subcommittee.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you very much.

I would like to just recommend that all of you gentlemen take back to your respective services the fact that we do have a Congressional Military Family Caucus, which is focusing on the needs of military families.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING

Let me switch gears for a moment. There has been some talk about the Pentagon exploring modifications to the basic allowance for housing, including a possible across-the-board reduction in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate as a way to find continued savings within the department.

Let me just ask each of you if you feel that the cutbacks to the BAH will increase the out-of-pocket housing expenses for servicemembers and their families. And secondly, do you think it will jeopardize the stability of the privatized military housing program?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Who wants to take that on?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. I will start.

There have been some proposals being thrown around that I think that every one of us that is sitting at this table has been privileged to hearing—or not privileged to hearing, whichever way you want to take it. But it was a—it deals with a proposal that includes a cost-sharing element that wraps-up over several years, potentially an average of 5 percent out-of-pocket per member. However, members will still be covered by a BAH rate protection, meaning they would have time to prepare themselves when it came time for them to have to pick up and to move.

So there is a proposal out there talking about approximately a 5 percent out-of-pocket expense. Now, will it jeopardize the public-private venture domain? If the public-private venture housing partnerships are forced to reduce rent, financial health of the partnership would be impacted: less income to service improvements; long-

term maintenance like road repairs or renovations or utility maintenance could be deferred; community-like amenities like trash receptacles; tot lots could be deferred; funding for operations like garbage collection, ground maintenance could be cut back.

Over time there will be fewer amenities and less sustainment efforts, and the quality of the housing community would deteriorate. As the quality of housing drops public-private venture may have trouble filling units, resulting in less income to maintain the services. And eventually the sustainability and financial viability of the partnership could and, I believe, would be severely impacted.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. I think I would just add, yes and no. You know, you have to understand history and you have been around long enough, sir, to realize how far we have come when it comes to out-of-pocket cost for housing for our Airmen and their families, for our servicemembers' families. So it used to be up to 20 percent at times, and given if they can—a particular area it could have been even greater because of the way we determined what we would actually cover.

So I think we have come a long way, and now how we normalize and sustain over time, again, I think it is a discussion you have to have. When you talk about the privatized housing ventures, again, each of them have a model that is built on a certain amount of occupancy. If you get below that then it becomes a significant problem for them to be able to sustain the model, and I think we have to partner with them in this discussion.

And it is not an immediate effect. I think most people can appreciate that. You know, and I struggle with this a little bit, and I think you do too, when we sit there and say—I think you will see sometimes people's rent or cost out of their pocket will follow what we pay them, so every time we incrementally raise what we allow or allocate to servicemembers you will see, then, the cost of that housing incrementally in the areas that the pay goes up.

Now, if that is tied to the actual inflation rate, that makes sense, but in every situation it is not, so—

Mr. BISHOP. Do you think it will go down if—

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. No. I am as confident as you are that that is not going to be the case, but I am also confident that you might be able to put this on a different glide path, to be fair and to be able to manage the reality of what this cost does.

BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING IMPACT ON RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRANSITION

Mr. BISHOP. How is that going to impact recruitment retention and transition?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, I think that—so, from an Army perspective, if this proposal was enacted in law, you know, currently at Fort Benning for a sergeant the BAH rate is \$1,380 a month, and if it was enacted there would be a reduction of \$69 a month a reduction of 5 percent over 5 years.

For a recruiting perspective, I don't think it is going to have any impact because the person we are recruiting really does not understand or is aware of the benefits that they receive upon, you know, serving in any of the services.

From retention, it may cause some impact. You know, there are other indicators—or other things that affect BAH besides this proposal. For instance, if you have a place where the housing market has gone down significantly and there are a lot of repossessed homes and the value of homes is less, normally renters will charge less and that will result in a housing market analysis that would lower the BAH rate for people who are moving to that area.

Now, the Air Force had some pretty significant floods out there in, I think, South Dakota. I get the two mixed up but, you know, the rates increased exponentially because there was less housing available. So there are other things besides the proposal that impact it.

I do think it may have an impact for some people who may have chosen to settle and stay in an area that is impacted by this loss of money in their pocket, and it may have an impact. We just don't know right now, sir.

COMMISSARIES IMPACT ON BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING

Mr. BISHOP. There are some recommendations about our support for commissary privileges and how it will tie in with the lowering of BAH in terms of recruitment and retention also?

Master Chief STEVENS. Congressman Bishop, if I could just add one thing to the housing piece, I was a part of the discussion in the meetings as the BAH rates were discussed and what we need to do, and I will tell you that I wasn't excited about it, but you can't always have your cake and eat it too, and we understood—I understood the realities, and you cannot talk about the recommendation for housing without talking about force structure because they are interconnected.

I don't believe the recommendation was made arbitrarily, that we just said, "Hey, it sounds like a good idea." The recommendation is proposed because the pie is only so big and we have a responsibility to be able to provide force structure for our sailors, and also to provide adequate housing and housing allowance for them.

How we work through this—so the proposal has been made and now there will be a lot of discussion on what exactly this means and how we phase this in and what—the impact it has to our people and the economy—the local economy. One thing that I haven't sorted out in my mind is we talk about a 5 percent—and I don't want to use the word decrease because, as Sergeant Major Barrett said, if you are living in Washington, D.C. today and let's just say, for example, tomorrow we said there is a 5 percent decrease, those servicemembers and sailors in Washington, D.C. will still get the amount they are getting today. It would be for those that come in later on that would see that decrease.

They are interconnected. The piece about the renters insurance and the 5 percent—when we say 5 percent it is less than what the survey has done for the area. So you survey annually an area and you determine what the housing rate is, and then it would be 5 percent less than what the survey comes back with—you know, to us with. It is not just a cut in pay.

And so I think there are some things that need to be reconciled, but I understand the reason why the conversation is being had, and it is about the pie only being so big, and it is not always easy

to eat—you know, to have the cake and eat it too, if that makes any sense. Thank you.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Congressman Bishop, you know, you bring up the commissary, now I think we get to the real crux of this when you talk about it is a collective impact of everything that we are talking about with compensation. So we could have a conversation about BAH, and that is a meaningful, purposeful conversation and you might come to some point where that seems reasonable, but when you start talking about this—and it goes beyond the commissary, as you know—that is where I think all of our concern lies is the collective impact on everything that we are putting on the table. It goes right back to the uncertainty that we all spoke of in the beginning, and what does it mean to serve.

And I guarantee all of that will have an impact on retention. There is just no question in my mind, when you put all of that on the table people are going to start thinking differently about how long and can they continue to serve over time.

Recruitment I think will always be a challenge for the reasons that you have challenges even when this isn't on the table, and that is what is offered on the outside, the amount of people that are actually eligible. But again, they come in for different reasons; they stay for really different reasons in many, many cases. So I think it is important that as you kind of tee that up it is the collective impact of everything that we are talking about that really rocks at the very foundation of what type of entitlements and benefits do we think are appropriate for the men and women that serve and their family.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Bishop.

Forgive me if I get up and move around. It is no reflection on the testimony or the length of time. It is simply because I had both my knees totally replaced fairly recently and they are a little sore and I keep driving them into the underside of this table right where they did the surgery, so it keeps me—it makes me have to take—have to get up and move around a little bit.

If I could, at this time I would like to recognize Mr. Valadao.

SERVICES HOUSING AND BARRACKS PROGRAMS

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Master Chief Petty Officer Stevens, although the Bipartisan Budget Act provided some relief in fiscal year 2014 and 2015, I understand that it is challenging to find room in the Navy's budget for barracks construction and renovation projects as priority fleet requirements are funded. At our meeting yesterday you mentioned the Navy's goal of providing adequate, rated quality 1 and quality 2, barracks for the Navy's enlisted personnel by 2022. Is the Navy on track to meet its stated goal?

Looking beyond the Navy's metrics and referencing your personal experiences and observations as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, how would you describe the conditions of the Navy's bachelor quarters? Are the sailors mentioning the conditions of the barracks as one of their concerns?

Master Chief STEVENS. Mr. Congressman, as Lemoore Naval Air Station—Lemoore falls within your area of responsibility, I know

that this is near and dear to your heart. Best-laid plans, so last year when I was preparing for testimony I was briefed that for us to get to Q1—what we call quality 1, quality 2 housing, which is what Congress has asked us to get to 90 percent by 2022, it was going to require us to fund \$195 million a year, both for new construction for MILCON—military construction—and for modernization and renovation. So a portion of that would go to new construction and the—and a portion of it would go to renovation aspect of it.

As a result of our budget dilemmas that we are in, what we have found is that we are not going to meet that goal. The best that we are going to do with what we have available now is we will make 50 percent by 2017. That is as far out as we have done some planning. And we recognize it is going to take substantially more money to meet the goal by 2022 because every year that you defer it gets more expensive and you compress that timeframe, so what was a 10-year becomes a 7-year becomes a 6-year.

And so you either have to kick the can down the road a little bit further or you have to provide the funding necessary to get where you need to be at the time that you were asked to meet that requirement. So we are in a tough spot right now. We are able to at best—at best we are able to sustain, but I would say that we are actually losing ground slowly but surely, so somebody somewhere down the road is going to get a pretty substantial bill for single sailor housing if we are unable to do something about it in the near term.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Sir, I was wondering if I could pile on to the master chief petty officer, because—and I would hope that everyone else does too, but when we start talking about facility condition index, you know, I don't know if we are going to be able to sustain in the long term. Right now we are sitting pretty. You know, the fidelity of Congress has provided us wonderful new barracks and homes.

But when we start talking about facility sustainment, restoration, modernization, when we start talking about furniture, fixtures, and equipment, and how we rotate that stuff in and out, when we start talking about personnel support equipment that helps support running the barracks and the homes and all those things, when we start taking larger financial impacts of those things, the things that become—okay, what is more important, warfighting or putting a new coat of paint on a building or fixing a window or fixing the hot water? Those things are going to become second and third important. So the long-term sustainability for facility sustainment, restoration, modernization, furniture, fixture, equipment, personnel support equipment are going to become very important starting after this year. And you are going to start watching facility condition index going from Q1 to Q2, Q3 being the norm, and that is just unsatisfactory for those who are wearing the cloth, who are putting it on the line every single day.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. If I could just pile on too, sir, sorry, but it is important because our young men and women have an expectation that we have built since really 2005 with our barracks action, where we were able to receive a huge increase in the quality

of life specifically for our single soldiers on behalf of this committee, and we are very, very appreciative of it.

But because of the last few years for the Army, our challenge has been how do we maintain some level of readiness and make sacrifices within SRM, and those facilities that have been built from 2005 and towards now are going to need routine maintenance and we have been doing that, but last year we had to take some pretty significant movement in SRM in order to maintain some level of readiness within the Army.

And so my fear is that as we move forward in the future, if we don't get this issue with sequestration resolved—and we are going to be able to do some things beyond life, health, and safety within the barracks this year and other locations—we will continue to be in this do-loop of we have got great facilities but they are going to need some routine maintenance and if we can't get the predictability and the—with sequestration resolved then we are going to have to make adjustments, and they are not going to be towards the barracks in order to be able to be ready.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. So we share the same concern. We actually in the Air Force do meet the 90 percent today. That doesn't mean we don't have 3,300 inadequate dorm rooms. We have about 900 Airmen living in inadequate dorms and about 3,800 Airmen and Soldiers in the pipeline training with inadequate facilities.

We do centrally manage this. We do have a plan to get to where we want to be. But the point that the Sergeant Majors make is absolutely right: We are taking significant risk in sustainment, restoration, and modernization as we balance that across the budget, and every year things are declining. And without some ability to kind of put money back into that, these numbers start to—it can really slide quickly.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much. And of course, if you could communicate to your members, the sequestration is not the problem; that is just a symptom of the problem. It is the unsustainability of the social safety net programs that are growing out of control and the debt and the deficit that is the problem that fundamentally we—all of us are going to have to deal with, and I am confident we will.

We recognize my good friend from North Carolina, Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And just picking up on the chairman's last comment, I feel compelled to amend it a bit. You know, there is plenty of discussion that we need to have around here with respect to our fiscal future—what it does to accelerate this economic recovery, what it takes to have a sustainable fiscal course. The thing we can agree on is that sequestration is a terrible answer to that, and that you have borne the brunt of that and many of our domestic investments have borne the brunt of that, and we all want to escape that.

But the kind of fiscal solution—I look back to the 1990s and remember a couple of comprehensive budget agreements that actually resulted in balanced budgets for 4 years, paying off \$400 billion of the national debt. When you look at that success story, not that far distant in the past, it wasn't just a matter of the social safety net.

Yes, there were some entitlement cuts in the mix; there were some discretionary spending cuts in the mix; there certainly were some tax increases and loophole closings in the mix. I don't think we are served well by focusing on any one remedy. There is no silver bullet. If there was we would have discovered it. We are just going to have to get our act together here and come up with a comprehensive approach looking into the future, both for the standpoint of economic health and also for the standpoint of our fiscal health.

So that is the way past sequestration, and I am also glad that we have these 18 months to do a normal appropriations process. I think we can mutually benefit from that. But we know what looms after that, so we are not out of the woods yet.

SERVICE MEMBER DEPENDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Let me ask you a question about your relationship, especially the relationship of your stateside bases and facilities, to public education. There are just a couple of aspects of this, and I will be very brief.

We know that the quality of local public schools—often the children of your families are in the local public school systems, more often than not. They are receiving some help through Impact Aid but that is not at a very good level now. You have a stake in the quality of those public schools.

And then all of you, I think, have talked about career readiness and about the increased emphasis of the active military on career readiness. This isn't just something that happens once they are out; this is a matter of you said a year in advance, I think, you are beginning to help your servicemen and women think about that and prepare for it.

Presumably, that, too, leads you to draw on local facilities, local opportunities—I would think mainly the community colleges. I know the bases in North Carolina, there is often a heavy reliance on community colleges. And the community colleges are enhanced by having this group of recent military people making this transition in their midst.

So I am asking you a kind of general question. I assume you pay attention to this. I assume that in your thinking and planning you know how dependent you are on the quality of these public education systems, all the way from the public schools to the community colleges. You know that you are not entirely paying for that; other units of government, other jurisdictions are paying for this. It needs to be thought of as a partnership.

So I am asking you a kind of open-ended question on any of these points of impact. What kind of thinking are you doing? Are you seeing some innovations, some new departures in the realm of relationship to the public and vocational education?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Sir, if I could go first, so we have got the career skill program that we have instituted out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington, and we have had some tremendous success in partnership not only with the local trade union but the community college and then the installation as part of some pilots we have done with transitioning soldiers.

So I will give you a couple examples. We have transitioned 20 soldiers into a welding program while they were on active duty in support of the local trade union, who was the validator of the requirements, and 100 percent of those soldiers were placed in jobs upon leaving the service.

We have also done the same thing with welding, and that we have had another 20 graduates who went through the program while on active duty using both tuition assistance and post-9/11 G.I. bill benefits to pay for that program; 100 percent of those soldiers were placed in positions upon graduation.

Also done that with heating, ventilation, and cooling, and also from a software design perspective.

We are expanding that program in Fort Riley in Kansas, and we are looking for other opportunities with other states to expand that program. I think this has huge potential for trade skills that we are challenged with, I think, within the United States, and we are very excited about it.

Not everybody wants to go get a 4-year degree and work for a firm. Some people want to use their hands. And we are highly encouraged by the success rate we have had right now. We couldn't do it without that local partnership with not only, in this case, the trades, but also the community college that has the material to actually help the soldiers learn.

And so I think we are on the right path when it comes to this program.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Sir, I would add we are taking care of the servicemembers and are working on that, I do think we have done a lot of really good things—you can talk about the Military Education Coalition Act, where we are taking care of our military family children as they transition from state to state so they don't find themselves behind or, you know, not being able to graduate on time or taking courses. I think this is huge for them.

Actually, in the Air Force we have school liaison offices at every one of our locations to help be that facilitator, that mediator to ensure that our family members, as they move from location to location, they have a single point where they can go in and they can look for their needs.

Because to be honest, and you mentioned it, every place isn't the same. Every local education opportunity is not adequate. It is not adequate for the citizens that live there all the time and it is certainly not adequate for the servicemen and women and their families when they go there. You will see a lot of service people put their children into private schools because of that. That is an induced cost, obviously, to them.

But I do think we are doing a lot. There is a lot of work being done. I will tell you, Athena does a lot of work with this, with bringing this together, and the other services, on the virtual school networks that are out there. They can be very powerful for our servicemembers and how they can move around and stay current and get the courses that they need to be able to graduate.

Our daughter herself did that when we transitioned up here so she was able to graduate from Texas by that. And we do have very dedicated education offices at our—within our Air Force that work with all those local institutions for the higher education point to

bring some of them onto our installations to provide opportunity for servicemen and women to take courses to be prepared to advance their professional military careers or advance themselves if they leave the service.

So I think we are doing a lot here but there is a lot of work and a lot of opportunity here, too, I would agree.

Master Chief STEVENS. If I may, so just to tell a story, so let's imagine that you are transferring from Norfolk, Virginia to San Diego, California, and one of the things that you are going to have to do is enroll your three children in school in San Diego. Those sorts of things place stress on our force.

Because of the resources that all of you have provided us, we have put in place what was just mentioned, a school liaison program. So every one of our regions, every one of our areas have school liaisons, depending on the size of the region will depend on how many liaisons we have. And they are essentially embedded with these schools.

So if you wanted to make a phone call to find out, what are the details? What do I need to know? How do we register? Where do we show up? What is the class schedules? Who is the teachers that my children are going to be involved with? They could make that phone call, get that information. Then, when they show up to that location, they can have a conversation with that school liaison officer and answer all those questions that reduce the stress of the family.

That is one of many programs that you have put in place. So when you asked me earlier what are my concerns, it is those things that stress the fleet. If for some reason funding levels were reduced and one of the sacrifices that we had to make was to remove school liaison officers from those schools, now we have a problem. Now I have increased stress along with the extended deployment lengths, and all this starts to add up.

Much like Sergeant Major Chandler talked about, we also are instituting a program where our servicemembers will be given the opportunity, commanding officer signs off on it, and 3 or 6 months prior to their separating from the service they can attend a vocational school and increase and get certified on the skills that many of them already possess so that they become quick and productive members of society. So we have that program, as well. Thank you.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. And sir, just to echo exactly what Sergeant Major Chandler and the master chief and the chief master sergeant said, we have the same exact programs in the Marine Corps with our school liaison programs, our education support offices aboard all of our installations and bases.

But I would also add that since we really got aggressive on how we are handling our transition readiness seminars, our goals planning and successes, when you have that 2-day pathway training they are really helping our Marines and our sailors, soldiers, and airmen to help set themselves up for success, whether they decide to go to a higher education, to a college or a university, or whether they are going to some type of vocational tech school or if they are going to go on the job hunt or entrepreneurial skills. But the new TRS is really helping, has really boosted how we have set Marines up for the future.

Mr. PRICE. Mr. Chairman, I really am impressed by this testimony, and I come from a state that prides itself on being a military-friendly state. We mean it. But we are engaged in battles in that state right now that really affect the future of public education up and down the line, so I hope that in whatever ways are open to you, you communicate very, very clearly that part of being a military-friendly state is having a system of public education that your families can count on, and certainly a system of community college and other training that will assist these men and women as they make these transitions.

Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Dr. Price. It is a question near and dear to my heart and I could not agree more. It is a superb question and really, really glad to hear that you have all got programs in place to help those families and those kids get into school.

But in particular, as Professor Price points out, the community colleges are extraordinarily important in helping to teach skills to these young men and women as they begin to transition into the private sector. I am delighted to hear that you have got programs it sounds like—I just want to make sure I understand—that are—that overlap, that work with the community colleges and allow the men and women under your command to earn credit in either 4-year universities or in the local community colleges. Is that what you are saying?

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Yes, sir.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. That is right.

Mr. CULBERSON. That is fantastic. It is a great program, one that I have worked on and was, from personal experience, very familiar with in Texas when I was in the Texas House. Carry that legislation in Texas and I know it works beautifully. Delighted to hear it.

Great question, Dr. Price. Thank you, sir.

If I could, let me recognize Mrs. Roby.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the ranking member, let me just say that I am absolutely thrilled to have the responsibility and the privilege to serve on the Appropriations Committee, but to be an advocate for our men and women in uniform and their needs is just—really, I have just been so grateful for this.

And let me just say to each of you and your spouses and your families, thank you for your service and sacrifice to our country. And just the opportunities that I have had to interact with you on my time on the Authorizing Committee, but now here on Appropriations, I find it deeply gratifying to advocate for our military families, so thank you to each of you.

BUDGET CUTS AFFECTING THE WELFARE OF SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILY

I just want to continue along the lines that have already been mentioned about the Secretary of Defense and his intent to mitigate cost by slowing the growth of the tax-free housing allowances and terminating reimbursement for renters insurance and reducing subsidies for the commissaries, and that means—we all recognize

that there are going to have to be some tough decisions made, and you have emphasized the impact of these.

But I am particularly concerned about the welfare of the military families, those that are the—especially those that are the junior enlisted personnel, and some 2,000 of which are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. And so I just would like for each of you to take a minute to discuss your thoughts about how these cuts may impact our most vulnerable military personnel, and also, in light of those cuts, discuss the impact on the morale of these junior military personnel in light of these cuts.

So if each of you will just address that? Thanks.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Thanks for the opportunity, ma'am.

First of all, I don't want to see any of our soldiers on SNAP, and for the several hundred within the United States Army that are on SNAP, there are probably 700 different reasons—where their fiscal environment is, what they have chosen to do with their money—which may influence why they have to get federal assistance through the SNAP program. We do, I think, a pretty good job of helping soldiers in need to determine, you know—for instance, if you get a 19-year-old soldier who may have gotten married between basic training and their first unit of assignment, their level of understanding about the financial side of life is probably relatively limited.

So we do have a program in place where we help them to understand things like what is your credit score and, you know, how to monitor usage of a credit card and trying to have a balanced budget approach. We need to do better in that area. I think that is a part of—across the life of a person in the service there are certain key points in your life where you have got to conduct some assessments on where you are in your—and how you are fiscally viable.

I just got back from the National Training Center in California last—actually Saturday, and spent 2 days out in the box with the soldiers talking to them about a lot of different issues, and the morale of our junior enlisted soldiers is actually very high because in that environment they are out there doing what they came in the Army to do. They are out training, you know, they got a little dirt and mud on their boots and shoes and, you know, they are having a great time and they are excited about what they are doing.

You know, some of their concerns are, you know, what is my place in the service in the future? I love what I am doing. Am I going to be able to stay? And as we work through this transition and reduction in the size of the Army, you know, those are challenges we are going to have to answer—be able to answer for them.

But generally in the Army I think morale is very high, and especially with our junior soldiers. And a big part of that is really because of the ability we have got this year with being able to refocus on training and readiness. The worst thing you want to do is have a soldier sitting around on their thumbs without anything to do, and so if they can get out there and train in large, collective tasks they are excited; they want to be a part of the team.

Master Chief STEVENS. I echo what Sergeant Major said about morale. One of the things that we do when we go out and do fleet engagements is I will have, as an example, maybe 500 or so sailors in an auditorium, and I will ask them to close their eyes, to lay

their head back, and I will say, "I am going to ask you what you think the morale of the force is based on your own experience and the experience of your shipmates." And when I ask them—I say, "Judge it on the scale of poor, good, or excellent."

And so when they close their eyes I say, "Raise your hand if you think it is poor," and maybe a couple of hands go up in 500. If I say, "Do you think it is good, raise your hand," and probably 95 percent of the hands go up. Then the rest of them come up for—sailors don't typically say anything is excellent, but—so "good" for a sailor means good—really good, right?

So they are pretty satisfied. And most of them joined—the large majority of them joined to do the mission that they do, and they are excited and want to have the opportunity to do that.

We don't make sailors successful. We set the conditions for them to be successful and then they have a responsibility, and one of the conditions that we set for them is teaching them financial responsibility. Unfortunately, we have a few folks out there that don't take that opportunity and so we have to put extra special attention in those areas.

Will these reductions—I don't like to use—let's say slowing of growth in these different areas that we talk about—will it have a negative impact on our people? Maybe to some degree. It is certainly not going to have a positive impact on them. It may have a neutral impact on them.

But for some of those, it is going to require some belt-tightening, certainly. No doubt about it. Which is why we are not excited about it.

But again, we have to be responsible as leaders and understand the situation that we are faced with and make recommendations and do the best we can with what we have. Thank you.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Ma'am, we are working aggressively to actually modify how we are teaching our personal finance management to our Marines, because a disciplined Marine will prevent us from having to have any type of federal assistance in the future. So what we are actually working at, we presently do have a wonderful personal financial manager's course where we teach and we make command financial managers to help them teach responsible finances, spending, and things of that nature.

But I would like to turn right to the morale piece and talk about, you know, busy hands in the Marine Corps are happy hands. Deployed Marines are happy Marines.

Idle hands starts to impact morale and that is when it starts to suck. So we like to be busy. We are a young force. We have to be busy, and the more busy we are the happier we are. We have a bias for action and we lead with our chin by force, so that is for us.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Ma'am, thanks for the opportunity. I think I would approach it just a little bit differently because we are at a little different place in some of the things we are doing in the Air Force than the other services right now, and we will all kind of, you know, things are sequestic, right?

I do go back to this collective impact, and we are talking about so much stuff. This creates uncertainty, and uncertainty is stress, and, you know, it is hard to sit there and say morale is great when

everybody is stressed, because even when it doesn't affect them it affects somebody that they know. And it might affect them in the future if they are okay this time, so they worry about that.

I would tell you, though, first and foremost, they are really proud. They are proud of what they do and they want to do it, and they want to be in the Air Force, they want to be part of this military.

So morale is there, but to sit there and kind of say everybody is walking around with a big smile on their face because of all the stuff we are talking about, that would just be disingenuous. It really would. They are concerned, you know, and their families are concerned.

But we have to do the responsible thing here. You know, we don't have an option, as branches of services and as a DOD, to come in and say, "Yes, that was good, but not enough. Here. Here is what you have to do." You know, we understand what we are required to do for the nation and we are going to put forth the best military advice we can to be able to sustain that and do that.

And I think our servicemen and women are committed to that as long as it is reasonable. And as soon as we can tell them what that reasonable is and then they can make the decision, I think that is a good thing. Because the longer you talk about something that you are never going to make a decision about, it just works everybody up.

You know, I will be honest with you. I have been in the Air Force 30 years, right? We have been talking about commissaries for 30 years, okay? We have been talking about retirement for 30 years; we have been talking about pay for 30 years.

None of this stuff is new, but how we are talking about it is very new. And given the realities of sequestration and what our servicemembers and their families have experienced, this is a lot more real than it ever was before, and that creates a sense of, "Oh my goodness, is this tough."

So I think we have to have these conversations. I think there are different ways to do things and still provide a phenomenal package. I mean, I honestly do believe that when we stand there and offer the package to the young men and women that are qualified to serve, say, "This is what it is about to serve," it is going to be phenomenal.

It may not look like it looks today. It doesn't look like it looked when I came in today, or any of us. I still think we will have great men and women who want to do it, and I think we will have ones that want to commit.

But it has to be reasonable. It has to be well thought out. And whatever we do in balancing this, it can't appear that we are doing it on the backs of those men and women that will sacrifice so much.

If we can have an intelligent conversation about why you have to slow it—when we talk about 12 years at a 40 percent increase, it is time to have a conversation about that. That is not a sustainable path. But to think that we are going to put everything on the backs of the men and women and their families that serve so we can have, you know, you pick it—pick the base, pick the weapons system, pick it—that is a more difficult conversation and you will

see morale tank and you will see a different type of person that decides to continue to serve.

To SNAP specifically, I have to go with the Sergeant Major on this. If you just look at what the base pay of our folks are, they don't meet the subsidy requirement. They make life decisions along the way.

Our basic pay for our most junior Airmen with the—you know, with the benefits that they are entitled to doesn't put them for the baseline qualification. Now you start adding on family members and things that we all do and it is fair, it breaks all of our hearts to see any of our men and women that are serving and their families on any type of subsidy—any type, whether it be SNAP or WIC or anything else—but it is not necessarily because we are saying we don't pay them enough money.

Mr. NUNNELEE [presiding]. I recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Farr.

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much.

BUDGET IMPACTS AND REDUCTIONS

Perhaps in the 20 years that I have been a part of the appropriations discussion, the issues we are talking about today will be the most important discussion about how we handle our affairs in the future.

Certainly you learn a few things. One is, there is no free lunch. When I got here, the Pentagon's budget was half of what it is now. We have gone to war twice in recent years, and we never paid for it.

So we are now in the situation with this huge deficit, and the attitudes here are, "Well, there is an easy way to solve that. We can cut, squeeze, trim, raise revenues, and come to some happy medium," but us here in the house seems to be split. Half of them want to do it on revenues, the other half want to do it on cuts, and we can't seem to find a middle ground.

I think Congress is hypocritical about that, because we all talk about how we are going to bring down the deficit, and people want to blame it on somebody else, it is loopholes or it is entitlements or whatever it is, but we can't just do it with cuts, squeezing, and trimming. It seems to me that it is interesting because the argument in some corners is that the entitlements are too great, and yet this discussion is all about soldiers' entitlements.

As Members of Congress we have got to go back and we have got to sell this next year, and explain how we are going to pay for the federal government. I think the remarks by Secretary Hagel the other day about the budget really brought it into reality because it is the first time that the Department of Defense has led with, instead of just asking for more money, but instead asking for the restructuring of how we pay for things. And I applaud him for that tough leadership.

I don't know whether we in Congress have the guts to go out and sell that to our constituents. Sergeant Major Barrett talks about the five pillars of readiness, and that you have got to have all five pillars in order or you are not going to have the military at a readiness that we want to have it at.

And yesterday in my office Master Chief Stevens said, "You know, I have got to go out and sell this to the troops—to my troops."

And I think you laid it out pretty well, and I would just like you to reiterate that for the committee, and all of you, about how you are going to sell this to the troops. We have got to sell it to our constituents.

You have got leadership jobs, and you have got to make some tough decisions. I hope, if you have to do this job, the commands come down and say, "This is the way it is going to be." Tell us how we ought to be selling it to our troops back home.

Master Chief STEVENS. Well, I want to make clear that I am not selling a used car, right, or a bag of air. What I am saying really is that leadership isn't always easy; as a matter of fact, it only really matters when it is really hard.

And we are faced with some really hard situations and choices right now. And more than selling, what we have to do—what I have to do with my sailors in the United States Navy is explain reality. The reality is, this is what we have, and this is what we must do.

The Nation depends on the United States Navy to provide its piece of security. So our force structure and modernization, the ability to pay for our stuff and our people and our training has to come first. That is the solemn duty and responsibility that we have.

But we also owe it to our people to provide them with fair compensation. But you have to do that all within the amount of stuff—the amount of money that you have been given.

And I can't sit here and say that I wasn't a part of the conversation, because for 15 months the chief of naval operations and I and other senior leaders have talked about this and what do we need to do to be responsible, so we have provided some recommendations, as you have seen Secretary—nothing that Secretary Hagel announced yesterday, with the exception of maybe a couple of things, came to me as a surprise.

As I sat with Theresa and we listened to his speech I said, "None of this surprises me. We have been talking about this." He listened to the senior enlisted leaders and the service chiefs on these recommendations.

It is not easy. I get it. And it is not popular. I am a sailor. I get a paycheck, and I will have a retirement package, and I have benefits, and this affects myself and my family, as well.

But I also understand the situation we are in and the responsibility that we have as leaders to make bold, hard decisions when necessary and stick with it, so that is what I have to go out and talk to my people about. And they are not going to be excited about it, and I understand it, and I don't blame them. But I have to tell them the truth and then explain to them why we are in this situation.

Thank you.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. I find a great way of messaging to the Marines is I like to lay out—kind of like the master chief said, you kind of lay out the story, you kind of lay the rules and you explain the world to them that it is not getting any nicer. Once you tell

your Marines that, and, “Don’t forget why you actually came in. Why did you put on the cloth of the nation?” And you remind them a little bit about history.

And then I ask them, “Hey, you tell me right now, what is more important to you, full spectrum battle equipment”—and that is the boots on your feet, to the fire retardant gear that we put against your skin, to the body armor that will take a bullet, to the helmet that goes on your head, to the rifle that is in your hand with the optic on it so you can deliver the business end of that bullet to the person who is trying to kill us or take away our liberties, to the night vision goggle we give you—I go, “What is more important, full spectrum battle equipment or one of these entitlement-type things?”

And immediately the Marine will look at you and say, “Well, yes, full spectrum battle equipment.” Yes, why? “Well, because it keeps our liberties.”

I say, “Okay, let’s talk about what is more important, ground combat tactical vehicle strategy, putting ourselves inside of something and getting us from ship to shore so we can take it to the enemy and keep them from being on our shores, or this little entitlement?” And they will immediately say, “Well, yes, ground combat tactical vehicle strategy is more important.”

And I ask them, “What is more important, fifth-generation airframes, like a supersonic stealth aircraft, or some little entitlement?” And they will quickly tell you, “Yes, I want that support coming in on top of me so that we can take it to the enemy.”

And you will ask the question—when you lay it out to them, what is more important, they will start to get it. And then—you know, I learned this from the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy—you pick up a leave and earnings statement in December of 2013 and you pick up a leave and earnings statement in December of 2014, the Marine will quickly go, “Oh yes, I got more money.” This is about slow growth, and this is about priorities, and that is how I have been messaging it, and that is how I have been selling it.

Mr. FARR. You want to come to my town hall meeting? [Laughter.]

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. This does come up all the time, and again, I don’t use the term at all “sell” either, because it does sound like we are trying to put something on the table that they probably don’t want but we want them to buy it. It is really—I start it out like this—it is, “Are you ready to have the adult conversation?” Because if you are going to have the adult conversation, it is the same conversation you have in your own home about how much money you have and what you are going to spend it on and how you prioritize that money to do what you need to do.

And we are here to do something for our nation, so I use many of the same talking points that you heard the Master Chief Petty Officer and the Sergeant Major talk about, and then you kind of lay it out there: Why do you do this and why do you continue to do this?

And I kind of end it all like this, because it is about service—it is about service at the end of the day, otherwise we will never, ever be able to get right with it. We are never going to pay some-

body enough money to lose their life, lose a limb, lose an arm. It is never going to come up to that. That is not what compels people to stay and do what we do. This is about service, and it is absolutely not a jobs program.

So we do this for love of country. We do it with all of our heart. And I think 90 percent of the people that we are talking to in those town hall meetings are doing it for the same reason.

But you will always be working with that other group that just isn't going to get it, and it may be a jobs program to some of them. They have become so used to what they are receiving, and that is unfortunate, and our job is to bring them to where the 90 percent is, to get them connected.

But the fact is is if it were easy, somebody else would have already done it, like you said, right? This isn't easy for us in the military.

We would love for you to give us unencumbered budgets. I can promise you that it would look a lot different than what we have presented to you, right? That is not real. And that is exactly what the sec def said. I mean, we are contending with reality in the best way we can for the nation.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Just real quickly—I am not going to regurgitate what any of my brothers here have said, but I think the challenge we all have to take a step back from and recognize is that Congress has been very generous in supporting servicemembers over the last, going on 13 years, and a person that came in the Army in 2002 has no idea about what issues were in 2001, and that they have seen relatively unconstrained growth in not only the equipment they received but the training that they got, and at the end of the day, a 40 percent increase between 2001 and 2013 in their take-home pay.

And so for any group, when you change that dynamic there is going to be friction, there is going to be complaining, there are going to be questions. You know, all of our job, just like our service chiefs and our secretaries, is as we move forward to inform, to explain, and to say that, look, you know, we have to provide a trained and ready force in whatever service it is to do what the nation needs us to do, and that means that in some areas, including being able to repair things in the barracks or field new equipment, are going to be restrained along with your compensation.

You have still got a great benefits package. Let's recognize things like health care for the services, which is a fantastic benefit. Let's recognize post-9/11 G.I. bill, which is one of the greatest benefits we received over the last 12 years.

So let's recognize the good gifts that the American people have given us. Let's use the taxpayers' dollars wisely. And let's recognize that sometimes you may have to use a little bit more of your disposable income to take care of your needs, and I think we are going to get through this.

It will be complicated. It will be some friction points. But I believe, at least within the Army, that we are going to be okay as time goes by.

And you have just got to get out there and talk to them and tell them the truth. Be candid. Don't B.S. them, and if you do then you are in trouble.

ARMY ANALYTICS GROUP AND RESEARCH FACILITATION TEAM AND
SUICIDE

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much. I really appreciate that. I think this is going to be the toughest thing for us Members of Congress to try to communicate to our constituency.

And last, I just want to say something, I have talked to you a lot personally that the Army set up in my district the Army Analytics Group and Research Facilitation Team. Essentially what they are is a big data team, and their briefing to me is that they have the capability to identify potential traits for both mental and physical conditions that could indicate a higher risk for suicide. They do this by analyzing all the data in the DOD databases, in compliance with all the privacy regulations. But this is a new field of big data analysis, and they are responsive to your asks.

I am very keen on how we can identify and prevent, or possibly not recruit people who have suicidal tendencies. The Army Analytics Group and Research Facilitation Team have the capability of helping you identify those folks.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. As am I, sir. I am very committed to try and reduce the propensity for suicide.

So we have got several initiatives similar to this. I am not familiar with this one, but I will take that for the record, and I will provide some feedback. Yes, sir.

[The information follows:]

The work by the Army Analytics Group (AAG) involves validating a risk model developed as part of the Army's ongoing Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS), a multi-year study the Army is conducting in partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health. The risk model seeks to identify certain traits that could be a sign of high risk of suicide or other relevant behavioral outcomes, thus potentially providing the Army a means to identify Soldiers who need help and thereby increase the likelihood of providing them proper support. AAG is working with the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) to provide a rich data environment where the risk model can function in a secure and tailorable way with the goal of providing decision makers and medical providers needed information for appropriate intervention while still ensuring privacy for Soldiers.

Mr. CULBERSON [presiding]. Thank you very much, Mr. Farr.

I now recognize at this time Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, good afternoon. Thank you so much for your testimony, your inspiring words, your inspiring example. We are very grateful for your willingness to be here before us.

A little while back I attended a coming home ceremony for a Nebraska National Guard Army unit. Been to a lot of those. Those are always better than send-off ceremonies. And they are slowing down, thankfully.

But as I was about to speak, the chaplain of the unit—and they had been assigned to Iraq—handed me a note, and I would like to read it to you, and it was written by a young child from Nebraska, and he thought it would be appropriate for me to see.

It says this: Dear Server of Our Country, I am wondering what it is like to be a soldier. I pray for the soldiers every chance I get. I was thinking about becoming a soldier when I grow up. Is it hard being away from home? I have a heart problem so I probably won't

be able to be one. Is it fun being a hero for our country? I hope you are doing well, and I pray for you. Love, Kathryn.

Unbeknownst to me, this was written by my daughter to that unit, and the chaplain put two and two together and he said, "Congressman, I think that you ought to see this," right before I was about to speak, which was not the right time to give me that. [Laughter.]

Nonetheless, I wanted to share that with you as a small way of, from my family, your families, of saying thank you.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Thank you.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Thank you, very much.

Master Chief STEVENS. Thank you.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Thank you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. A couple of points: I think, Sergeant Major Chandler, you just did an outstanding job of trying to reflect on the constraints, benefit growth, the changing nature of what is going to be the future of the military and how we actually, as all you did, how we are going to have to explain that as a team. I am talking about you and us, how we move forward here.

COMMISSARY BENEFIT

One of the things I did want to raise, though, is back to this commissary issue. Now, you talked about the program Soldier for Life, and we want to maintain this cohesion not only for current servicemembers but for people who have graduated, moved on. They still belong to the family.

It seems to me that in some ways that that commissary benefit keeps that connection very, very real, very alive. Now everything has got to be put on the table and examined, but in terms of not wanting to diminish those bonds with those who have served before us, particularly, it seems like that is a pretty delicate one right there.

Now, I want to get your perspective on this because of all the things we could do—I used to be on the—a member of the Lincoln City Council, by the way, and I used to tell the various agency heads, "When we have got a tight budget—we are going to always have tight budgets—don't come put the swimming pool closure up front here. Let's figure out something that makes sense and that is smart."

This one is pretty sensitive, commissary closure, and I think it impedes this work, whether it is Soldier for Life or the various other programs that you have, to keep continuity not only with the members who are currently serving but those who have gone before and ensure that culture. The military—your primary goal, your primary mission is to protect us, to keep us safe. What you do has far more social benefits and ramifications than perhaps we all realize.

You hold us together as a nation. Where else does a young person go for formation and right thinking, be given an opportunity if they just step up and say, "I am willing to sacrifice and do it"—where? You are one of the few institutions left that teaches essential, critical lessons for the well-being of our young people and our culture. And you provide a narrative for America itself.

The commissary might be small in that big picture, but nonetheless, it is one of those threads of continuity, I think. So I want you to address that. And I have two other questions, so if we could—

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. I will be quick, sir.

Mr. FORTENBERRY [continuing]. Maybe go through it quickly.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Just from a financial perspective, the Army provides \$500 million to subsidize the commissary, so it is a significant drain on resources that we have within the Army. I think that we have had growth in who is eligible to access the commissary over these last few decades. You know, it was originally intended to be for active duty persons. We opened it up to retirees and we opened it up to non-mobilized guardsmen and reservists, which is absolutely okay. But that comes with a cost.

And the other part of that is the commissary is very heavily regulated. I have been told it is actually the most heavily regulated organization within the Department of Defense.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. What do you mean by that?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. There are very strict rules on what the commissary can and can't do. For instance—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Now, would this help save them money?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, I think that if we did a comprehensive review of what the legislature says the law says and what the commissary can do—just let me give you one quick example. Can't sell any generic items in the commissary. Everything must be a first name, name brand item. You know that the generic items are a savings. They are savings on top of the name brand items, so if I can get, you know, generic Triscuits but then I have to buy regular Triscuits, there is a cost associated with that. So that is an example of ways that I think as we move forward the commissary might—Defense Commissary Agency might say that they can find some savings.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well, maybe this is some—an area where—in which we could potentially help. Loosen up some restrictions, as long as it is still made in America. Just don't go beyond that, but I think that would maybe be creative. It could help us both find the goals of delivery of service with reduced cost.

Master Chief STEVENS. I will recognize that we have to look at everything, and the commissaries being one of them, but I like what Sergeant Major just said, that we owe it to ourselves, to our retirees, to everybody that has access to do—I think to do a comprehensive review of the way we do business with the commissary. We have a Defense Commissary Board in place, and I believe if we provide them with the opportunity to really look at how we can tighten the belt, how we can be more efficient and look at ways at maybe even possibly changing the law to help that, that in the end we can still have a viable commissary system that provides the assistance that it does today and do so with less cost, so that would be my recommendation.

Mr. FORTENBERRY [continuing]. Gentlemen, I am going to move on to a couple other things, if you—the time is quite short—

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Sure. No, I understand. I would just emphasize one point to kind of support you, sir. So I think exactly they articulated right. There are some statutory requirements

here that, if we are able to address, I think we can get at some of this cost savings without just raising the cost.

Additionally, I want you to really appreciate not just why I do think you have to keep faith with those that have served and what they believe and should feel they have access to, but I am going to talk to you about those young airmen that Congresswoman Roby talked about that, you know, are right on that edge. That 30 percent saving is significant and they are shopping in that commissary.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. And, sir, I won't take but 2 seconds. I am a fan of it and I don't think we should be fussing with it. And I can go into greater detail—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Got it.

Sergeant Major BARRETT [continuing]. But I won't.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I got it. You seem to have this way of speaking very clearly.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. I think it is personally ridiculous that we are going to go after something that saves some—a young lance corporal, and he is free \$4,500 a year for every time he walks in there—he has got two kids and every time he shops it is \$240. Well, unbeknownst to him, he just put \$80 worth of gas into his car and he doesn't even know it.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Yes.

Mr. FARR. What about a retired officer?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. You served your Nation honorably, you have worn the cloth, and you are part of that 0.4 percent who is willing to put it on the line, hell yes, I think you should get the opportunity to—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well, Sam, let me control the time here. [Laughter.]

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I think I am gone over time so maybe I can come back to the other questions, but I did want to raise that one as a quality of life issue, and again, a cultural issue. And look, I think we have got a charge here. I think maybe we have a way out of this, if we—Mr. Chairman, can we perhaps take a look at what they have suggested and find a way to meet both goals of tightening the belt a bit but delivering more effective service? Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much. Absolutely. It makes no sense you can't sell generics, and something I absolutely will—this subcommittee will help you with.

We recognize at this time, Mr. Nunnelee.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

An important aspect of military quality of life is the free exercise of religion, the right that is guaranteed to every American by our Constitution. But we continue to hear of equal opportunity briefings that have been conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. These briefings have labeled Christian churches and Christian nonprofits as hate groups.

We have heard testimony before the Armed Services Committee these briefings have occurred at least at Fort Hood, Texas; Camp

Shelby, Mississippi; and an Army Reserve unit in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. Those attending these briefings have been instructed that if they associate with these groups, including financially contributing to a Christian church or a nonprofit Christian church they could be subject to sanctions under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Every time we ask about these hearings we are told, "Well, these were isolated incidents. They were conducted by an outside vendor who had been contracted to do it, and they won't happen again." And then they are repeated.

So I guess since the three briefings occurred on Army installations, I will start with Sergeant Major Chandler.

Are you familiar with the Defense Opportunity Management Institute and the equal opportunity briefings?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. I absolutely am, sir, and I am very familiar with the incidents that occurred down in Camp Shelby.

Mr. NUNNELEE. What are the purposes of these briefings, particularly as they relate to Christian organizations?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, the purpose of the briefing, as it is for the rest of the services, is to ensure that our soldiers maintain their awareness of our Army's equal opportunity programs, or Navy or Marine Corps and so on. They are mandatory briefings that are occurred generally in once a year, normally held during some inactive duty training assembly or at some mobilization site, and, you know, in those two specific incidences down at Shelby it was an non-commissioned officer (NCO), very committed to what he was doing, but also, as my understanding, allowed some of his personal perspective to come into what he was trained to brief.

Went to the Web site, got some material, trying to show an example of, you know, here are some ways that, you know, you can make sure you have equal opportunity—it just came out wrong. You know, I applaud his efforts, or their efforts, but what they came across with was really, you know, it was contrary to our Army and the Department of Defense's idea of equal opportunity.

I know that the Chief of Staff of the Army—in both circumstances was notified, directed a investigation in both circumstances, and to ensure that not only the equal opportunity person but those soldiers who were trying to fulfill their duty were retrained in what their responsibilities were and what right looks like. I also know that the Department of Defense has asked the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), the organization that you talked at, to look at their exportable training packages.

You know, as the Sergeant Major of the Army I take responsibility for those soldiers and, you know, and I apologize for us not upholding our constitutional duty. We take an oath to it. I take it very seriously.

Mr. NUNNELEE. You indicated these were mandatory briefings, so what recourse do military personnel have if they are sitting in a briefing, and they are told, "If you make a contribution to a Christian church, you are subject to sanctions under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)." What options do—

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, in both circumstances, sir, the people that received the briefing knew what was being said was

wrong and came forward, and that is how we were aware of it, and it started the investigations to ensure we don't do it again.

You know, the briefing is about equal opportunity. It is not about, you know, if you join this organization and contribute, you know, you are not promoting equal opportunity. The instructor lost his way and, you know, we had to adjust the azimuth of that individual.

So we have many mandatory briefings, as I am sure each of the services do. There are annual requirements to ensure that basic things that define us as soldiers, sailors, Marine, and airmen, that we must attend and make sure that we are aware of.

Sexual assault is another example. We have briefings that must be done in a certain frequency to ensure that we have the most current information to our soldiers to ensure we combat sexual assault.

Both individuals, unfortunately, like I said, they lost their way.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Sure. And thank you for that.

You said they went to the Web site. My understanding, they went to the Southern Poverty Law Center Web site—

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. NUNNELEE [continuing]. For that information. Is there a protocol that says instructors can pick any Web site they want to and get information, or how do they know where to get information?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, sir, the—you know, we have a standard package and then usually if you are—if you want to be a great instructor you are usually going to try and add some more to it because sometimes, frankly, they can be pretty boring. You know, say you want to jazz it up some, so some different examples.

Unfortunately, like I said, this—these—both of these individuals, you know, went off track because they didn't really stay in line with what equal opportunity is within the services to begin with.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you. And I will be submitting questions for the record—

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. NUNNELEE [continuing]. To get information on where these briefings have occurred, as it relates to religious liberty, and information and materials that were presented, so thank you.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Happy to answer, sir.

RECRUITING GOALS AND PROGRESS

Mr. NUNNELEE. In the time that I have left I would like to start with Sergeant Major Barrett just to talk about where you are on recruiting. How is it going? What about young people's interest in going into the Marines?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Thank you, sir. I would love to talk about recruiting and retention collectively because they are inextricably linked.

With recruiting right now today we are enjoying, for the third year in a row, a quality that has just been remarkable. We started this year with a 53 percent start pool, meaning in 2013 our 2014 mission already had 53 percent of our mission was already populated for the year.

And we are on track to meet and/or exceed that same exact start pool. And the—

Mr. CULBERSON. Sergeant Major Barrett, if I could just for a second—forgive me for interrupting you just for a second, I just wanted to be sure to excuse Chief Master Sergeant Cody. He has got to catch an airplane. Forgive me for interrupting.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. No, I think we are okay, Chair.

Mr. CULBERSON. Are you good? Okay.

Excuse me, sir. Please continue. [Laughter.]

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Yes, sir. So a 53 percent start pool, and we are enjoying a quality coming in today that is just wonderful and we have been enjoying it for the last 3 years: 99.8 percent of every young man or woman that has joined the Marine Corps this year is a high school graduate, and that is just absolutely wonderful. When you talk about the mental aptitude testing, it requires a 60 mental aptitude testing to be able to enter the service, and the—for the United States Marine Corps it is a 63 is the minimum, and we have been sitting at a 75.1 mental aptitude, you know, young men and women coming into—so nothing but quality coming in.

So if you want to look down range and say, “What are we going to look like in the next 3 or 4 years,” high quality is coming in. At the same time, we are bringing in less this year than we have in previous years.

Now, as you kind of twist over into the retention piece, we are retaining a little bit less this year than we did last year, and as of January we were already over 100 percent submissions for those who wanted to stay in the Marine Corps. So to say the—to ask the Marine Corps, “Do you have a problem with reenlistment,” I will tell you yes, we—nobody wants to get out, which is a good problem to have.

We sit right now today at 109 percent submissions for the entire year and it is only February. And when you talk about how many have already executed, we are over at 90 percent have already executed for the year. And the qualities and the prerequisites to stay in are the upper tiers in our four-tier process of who gets to stay in the Marine Corps.

So recruiting and retention has never been better, so what we are going to look like in the next 3 or 4 years will be a small force, but high quality coming in and high quality being retained.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I am out of time. I will just submit questions for the record to the other branches on recruiting and retention.

And thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Nunnelee.

I do understand that you—if you need to step out.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. I am okay, Mr. Chairman.

MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING

Mr. CULBERSON. Are you good? Okay.

I, if I could just very briefly, would like to ask one thing that we have not really touched on yet is family housing, and ask each one of you, if I could, very briefly talk to us about are there any families in your branch that are still living in inadequate housing? When do you expect to complete all the construction to eliminate

this deficit? And talk to us about what the subcommittee can do to help you in that regard.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Sir, you are looking at me so I guess you want me to go first. No problem, Chairman.

So we have completed our Residential Communities Initiative program to get private interest to take over a lot of our family housing. We still have some that is managed by the Army—perfect example is Fort Myer, very small community, older homes, very expensive, nobody wants to take them on, they probably won't ever.

We have done extremely well. You know, the challenges that we have within our Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) program are really focused around issues surrounding problems with the impact of the housing bubble burst in specific areas where the cost of homes has decreased, which therefore, as I said earlier, has an impact on BAH rates, which causes our partners to become nervous. They have got an expectation when they submitted their plan that their rate would go at a certain increase each year, which would allow them to build more new homes and recondition less homes, and in some installations we, you know, we have a challenge in that area, where, because the economy is depressed so much locally, that we have problems.

Our RCI program, I think, though, is still very viable. We are going to have to pay attention to whether or not this initiative that the secretary of defense put forth comes to fruition and what its impact is.

For those homes that are in the Army Family Housing program, we have made improvements in many of those homes and we are adequate in what we need. Our challenge really, though, sir, is as we move forward and reduce the size of the Army, where do we make those investments now where we may not have as much of a population in the future? And so we have got to—we are paying attention to that. Now that the Secretary of Defense has made his announcement and as we move forward with Congress on where we are going and why, you know, we are going to have to make some adjustments in our MILCON program and in our program. Over.

Master Chief STEVENS. For the Navy, as I have talked about before, I think it is important that we continue to remind ourselves that the sustainment is going to be the work that lies ahead for us. It is not necessarily that we need more resources; what we need is to be able to sustain the resources that are in place.

So for the Navy we have—and I think numbers are sometimes interesting—139,000 of our sailors are married and live out in the economy, so that is 42.5 percent actually live out in the economy that have dependents that are married. So if they are living in substandard housing I may not know about it, but they are afforded the monies and the opportunity to live out in the economy.

So 40,000, or 12.3 percent, are actually living in what we call privatized housing, so their housing allowance goes to a company that runs a privatized housing. As a matter of fact, Theresa and I live in one of those homes right now. As a matter of fact, Sergeant Major Barrett and I are neighbors, and we share a front yard together.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. That is where I throw all my empty beer cans.

Master Chief STEVENS. Yes. And I am tired of kicking them back into his driveway, but—so 40,000 live in privatized housing; 139,000 live in the economy. And really, 13,000, or only 4 percent, live in what we call government homes—they are actually ran and operated by the Navy.

If they are I am not aware—and I have talked to the experts, and I spend a lot of time talking to our folks, our sailors out there, and I am not aware at this time of anybody that may be living in what we would consider to be substandard housing. Our Commander, Naval Installation Command has done a really good job of working with the communities, working with privatized housing and government to ensure that our families are in adequate housing, so—but that doesn't mean that we just say, "Okay, we are good." It is about the ability to sustain and be able to keep up with inflation in these housing areas.

Thank you.

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Mr. Chairman, the Air Force, has 6,400 inadequate government owned homes and about 7,600 inadequate privatized housing units. We are on a plan by 2019 to rectify that. The majority of the inadequate housing is in the PACAF AOR theater.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you, sir.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Sir, as far as how many inadequate or substandard homes that we have, I would like to take that particular portion for the record and give you the exact numbers.

[The information follows:]

Approximately 300 families are living in inadequate or substandard housing. The total population of inadequate or substandard homes is 345 (104 government-owned homes at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan and 241 privatized homes at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina.) We expect construction to renovate or replace these 345 units to be complete by 2018.

Mr. CULBERSON. Sure.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. I don't want to get that wrong. But, you know, to share with what Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy was saying, same thing and I echo the part about the long-term sustainability of those homes. When we talk about—and I mentioned that at the very beginning of our testimony.

And two-thirds of our Marines who are married also live off-base and rely on the local community, so we rely heavily on them to support our married Marines.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. I have nothing.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. A couple of other points I would like to bring up with you all. There was an—if you all are aware of a program, I believe it is in the Army, that the chaplains had called Strong Bonds—all of you have various programs that are clearly focused on family unity, family health. Strong Bonds seemed to me to be a particularly interesting program.

Well, I will just tell you a quick story: There was a political figure who one time got up to give a speech about a major political announcement about his future, and press was all gathered there, people had come from around, and he basically got up and said, "I

am not running,” and sat down. And it was a huge disappointment. People didn’t understand why.

Yes, absolutely.

Mr. CULBERSON. If I may interrupt—Sergeant Cody, do you need to leave?

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Yes. Thank you for the opportunity to testify Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you for your comments today.

Mr. FARR. Thank you for bringing your wife. [Laughter.]

Chief Master Sergeant CODY. Solidarity.

STRONG BONDS

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So this political figure got up and basically disappointed everyone by this—with this announcement, and people didn’t understand what had happened, and I whispered to one of my aides, I said, “Well, it is pretty clear to me. He and his wife had an argument last night about this.”

In other words, we kind of—an unhappy soldier on the field, and an unhappy Marine in a fight are—is distracted, and ensuring that family life is coherent and healthy to me is an absolutely essential part of your mission.

But anyway, I wanted an update on the Strong Bonds program. I thought it could be a model that we would use across the force structure because it seemed to me to be particularly impactful.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. So we still have Strong Bonds, sir, and we have had some—we have made some programmatic adjustments in it, to be quite honest. We had gotten on a track where we were being relatively extravagant in venues where we hosted Strong Bonds programs and looked at we were really not fiscally viable.

So instead of going to, you know, the Hyatt to host a venue we went to Holiday Inn Express, and really took a look at putting the emphasis on those organizations that were returning from deployment as the priority and being able to provide programs for those units that were in a training phase at installations, but at a reduced level.

If you redeploy, whether you are in the Army National Guard or Army Reserve or active duty, if you have got a Yellow Ribbon event for the Army Guard and Reserve, which is similar to Strong Bonds, or in the Army you have got a Strong Bonds venue where you are going to be able to go and participate either as a single soldier—we have broken it up a little bit—you have got a family Strong Bonds specific venue and then you have got, like I said, single folks who have their own needs and wants.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So aside from the resource allocation issue, is the program growing? Are the outcomes good?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. The program is maintaining, so it is not growing. We are maintaining. We feel that we have got it about right. Lot of folks would like to see the more extravagant venues that we had in the past, but in order to spread the equity across the force we thought it was the best way to do this.

And we have also broken it out into smaller venues, so you could have a 6-hour event, you could have a 12-hour event, you could have a weekend event. As a participant Jeanne and I have both

been to several Strong Bonds venues in our time, and it is definitely value added to the force.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay. Great.
Sergeant.

MILITARY FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Well, I could just tell you, sir, that something that is kind of along the same lines is our Marine and family readiness programs. We rely very heavily on how we are raising our families to include, you know, our spouses and children—everything from lifestyle, inside networking knowledge and skills programs, to prevention and relationship enhancement programs, to Marine Corps family team-building, to life skills, to coping skills, to child and parent counseling, to new parent support programs. All these things are designed to help raise and make a strong family, providing predictability in their lives.

Master Chief STEVENS. Much like the Marine Corps, we take the all-of-the-above approach, and we realize that there is no one-stop shop for family health. I often tell sailors that the priority should be self, family, then service. And that might sound selfish at first, but if you are not taking good care of yourself physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, then your family is going to suffer—your relationships.

And if you don't have that and then a good, solid relationship with your family, then it is impossible to come to your place of duty and perform at the level that we ask. So we take it very seriously.

Our Fleet and Family Service Centers really provide some great counseling for our family members if they believe that they need it. We have an ombudsman program, where we have a senior spouse that is connected with the other spouses, and if they believe that they are running into some challenges they can direct them to the proper resources.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. So all across the services this is deeply embedded within the culture?

Master Chief STEVENS. Yes. It has to be. It is an extremely important part of our mission readiness.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Okay.

QUALITY OF RECRUITS

Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, the second—the third question I wanted to talk to you about was back to your point, Sergeant Major, about the number of 17-to 24-year-olds who are qualified to enter into the Army—I assume you are experiencing something similar of a decline in the number of eligible candidates, either because of physical reasons or academic or some other moral reason I think you pointed out.

Have you ever considered—has the military done any study—because again, we are rebalancing what it means to be a 21st century fighting force—nimble, quick, rapid response, high-tech. Maybe not everybody can run five miles in 30 minutes, but they could be a heck of a warfighter behind a piece of computer equipment.

Is there anything going on that looks at eligibility criteria not to lower the standards but to examine whether or not the traditional

methodology of screening candidates makes complete sense in an era of new technology and new skill sets?

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Well, sir, it is a—one of the things that we have done with the Army Research Institute is to really look at just because you are qualified—highly qualified for this specific skill, you know, is that really what you want to do? Because if you are really—got a really high score, it is probably in some technical or math or whatever, we tend to recruit you into those skills that you are qualified for, but your sense of, “This is really—I am excited about this, this is what I want to do,” may not be taken into effect.

So we are, in fact, looking at mirroring some assessment tests to determine whether or not, not only are you qualified, but do you have the desire? And that is important.

Now, if you talk about physical standards, unfortunately, you know, if you look into the future we are going to be in a vague and ambiguous environment where even if you are sitting behind a computer, you know, you could have some enemy that attacks, you have still got to run. You have still got to be able to move, shoot, and communicate. So there are basic fundamentals that I think across all of the services that are really nonnegotiable.

We are learning some things as we move forward in our Women in Service Review about, you know, what are the physical demanding qualifications for specific military occupational specialties (MOSs), and as we move forward I am confident we are going to make some changes in our physical fitness program, and it may impact the sessions.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Sergeant Major.

Sergeant Major BARRETT. I would tell you that everything in the Marine Corps evolves around the ground fighter, and if you are not able to strap it on and be prepared to have 80 pounds of crap on your body and then take it to the enemy and then once you kick his butt then you are going to have to, you know, pursue him by fire, and we are not going to slow down on the physical standards. We are a young force. We are a fighting force.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. In our brief time together, Sergeant Major, it has become clear that you will give me a direct answer. Thank you.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Sir, if I could follow up on that real quickly, though, I think what I would ask you to consider is, so challenges for us from a physical requirement generally revolve around obesity and things like soft bones. There is not much we can do about that when they show up at the recruiting station or we are out there to see them.

I think this is something that societally if we recognize the responsibility to defend our nation then we are going to have to take a hard look at not only education of families but at what we do within schools to help our persons make the right decisions. The decisions they make as a 7-year-old—their families make on what they eat—impact them at the point of accessions and their ability to serve.

I also think the challenges we have physically—you know, that we have a less physically fit population to recruit from—go all the way back to what we say is—in society is important—sports, exer-

cise, nutrition. They all impact us not only as a country but in our ability to recruit and generate forces to defend our country, and I think that holistic approach has got to be taken into account.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Farr.

DEFENSE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman—foreign area officers from all the different services, train in defense language programs as part of the President's national security strategy. This strategy is to get all the military to speak the languages and understand the cultures, particularly of the areas where they are deployed.

I just wondered what is going on in the NCO world of trying to get noncommissioned officers into the foreign area officers' program and languages.

I know the Marines, you are now tasked with beefing up the guarding all the embassies and you have got to speak the language of the areas where you are guarding, and you have really aggressively taken this on.

I wonder what the other services are doing in order to increase their services foreign language capabilities? I represent the Defense Language Institute, so I have a vested interest in this, and, as you know, we have about 4,000 of the most incredible students in the world studying there from all the services. But I didn't know whether there is any emphasis, other than the foreign areas officers, to do that with Non Commissioned officers as well?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. Yes, I would love to jump on that. For the last couple years the Marine Corps has started up something right online where you are paralleled with the FAOs and RAOs. We have set up a FAS, which is the foreign area staff NCO, and the purpose behind the foreign area staff NCO is to perform the same exact duties as the foreign area officer. You are trained in language, regional expertise, and cultural lifestyles.

As of today we have put 15 Marines through NPS up there and DLI to become FAOs, FASs, and of those so far we have nine Marines right now—three master gunnery sergeants, four gunnery sergeants—who are presently forward-deployed, acting as forward area staff NCOs.

They are a red cell team with the First Marine Expeditionary Force; we have one at Marine Forces Africa; we have one serving with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit; we have four who are working at our Center for Advanced Operational and Cultural Learning; we have one with—in Marine Central Command; we have one with our Marine Special Operations Battalion; and we have one with our Security Cooperations Groups. And their job is to be there to advise that commander or when MOUs or units move into an area, they are the expert in that culture for that regional expertise that—and that language.

Mr. FARR. So do you think that is going to grow and do you see an increased interest in that field?

Sergeant Major BARRETT. We are still in the beta phases of it, but so far we have had nothing but great successes with it. And I am an advocate of it and the commandant really loves the pro-

gram, so some—my senses tell me this is going to continue to grow in the Marine Corps.

Mr. FARR. Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Go ahead.

Master Chief STEVENS. You know, as you operate on the high seas you come across a lot of different cultures and, you know, I have heard story after story about us coming in contact with a foreign vessel of some—that speaks some language other than—that U.S., American language, or English I should say—America has got a lot of languages—than the English language—and we get on the one M.C. and say, “Does anybody speak this?” Or the commanding officer may already have a list of those people.

And to my knowledge we have never not been able to answer the call. Somebody always in the unit has that language skill set.

So what we do to promote and to enhance that is we provide professions—or proficiency language tests. They are administered at our Navy College offices. They can take the test, they can show their proficiency, it gets recorded, and depending on the language that you speak you may even receive special duty pay for that language-speaking ability.

So we really promote that encourage that, as well as we have our linguists that we send to your neck of the woods, Congressman, to get trained at the Defense Language Institute there. So it has worked very well for us for, you know, several, several decades, and we will continue to promote that process and ensure that we have those people that can support us on the high seas.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Sir, you asked me that question last year, also, and we—

Mr. FARR. That is because Admiral Mullen, when he was Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), told me that the Army had the best Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. We do have a great FAO program. So when we spoke last year United States Army Europe had started off with two NCOs, which we call foreign area NCO, as a pilot. And over the last year we have generated probably a dozen people that fit into this category.

They forwarded their recommendation into the Army G-3 operations and it is going through the staffing process to see if we want to expand the capability. And, you know, our challenge right now is, do we need to make that investment in this capacity for our foreign area officers? Because we already know that foreign area officers have the language skills, and if we pair a NCO with them, you know, there is some cost associated with also sending him to language school, and we don't see the foreign area NCO moving into a career field like we do with our foreign area officers, that they would do this for a period of time and then go back to their core competency, whatever that is. So there is some analysis going on there.

You know that we are going to increase the size across the services of our Special Forces. I am sure that that is going to mean that there will be some growth in language skills, as it is a requirement.

So, you know, I think there will be a little bit of growth. I am not quite sure we are—whether or not we are ready to move for-

ward with the foreign area NCO piece. I can take that for a QFR and give you some exact details on where we are.

[The information follows:]

The Army is moving forward with the development of a Foreign Area NCO (FANCO) program. In December 2013, the Army approved and resourced an initial "pilot program" designed to provide Noncommissioned Officers with skill-sets that will enable them to better support Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) Commanders. The "pilot" affords 3 NCO's with the opportunity to conduct 6 months of "In-Region Training" where they will be trained and mentored in the art of statecraft, international relations, and establishing relationships with Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC), Army Service Component Commands (ASCC) and US Embassies. With this understanding and exposure to the unique cultural aspects of their regional experience, NCO's will utilize these skills and experiences to support RAF commanders and facilitate improved Security Cooperation planning and execution.

Mr. FARR. Thank you.

Sergeant Major CHANDLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CULBERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Farr, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Fortenberry.

And above all, want to thank each and every one of you. It particularly struck—I know the committee feels as strongly as you do that our unit morale is our greatest weapon, and we are going to do everything we can to support you, to help you, and to make sure that those young men and women do not have any worries, any concern, any anxiety at all about the support of the United States Congress and the country for the spectacular work that they do.

Want to particularly thank you, Sergeant Major Chandler, for your service to the country. We are certainly going to miss you.

Wish you the best in retirement, as we you, sir, Sergeant Major Barrett, and I know that Master Chief Stevens will be glad to stop cleaning up the beer cans in front of his yard.

But I do thank you for your service to the nation. God bless you in your retirement, and we will look forward to helping you.

And the committee is adjourned. And I want to remind members, however, that our next hearing is March 12th at 1:30 with service installation secretaries. Thank you very much.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

I want to follow up on my earlier discussion on the free exercise of religion - a right guaranteed in our constitution - and the Equal Opportunity Briefings conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) that have labeled Christian churches and Christian non-profits as hate groups.

Question 1: Has a review of DEOMI training materials been conducted? What material is considered non-federal reference material and could you provide me with a list of such sources that are used in the equal opportunity briefings? Is there DoD policy requiring what materials should be made available for training purposes? Who is responsible for approving the material's content?

Answer: It is the Army's understanding that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) conducted a review of DEOMI's Equal Opportunity (EO) Advisor Course training materials on 10-12 December 2013 and that that review is complete. Further, we understand that OSD has ongoing reviews of other templates for individual blocks of EO instruction for use in the Services. These reviews will probably continue into 2015. As DEOMI falls under the supervision of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, I cannot address the full extent of their reviews, including what non-federal reference materials that may have been used in EO briefings. The Army is also conducting a review of Army materials for courses that provide a general overview of EO and extremism training to Soldiers.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

I want to follow up on my earlier discussion on the free exercise of religion - a right guaranteed in our constitution - and the Equal Opportunity Briefings conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) that have labeled Christian churches and Christian non-profits as hate groups.

Question 2: Has a review of DEOMI training materials been conducted? What material is considered non-federal reference material and could you provide me with a list of such sources that are used in the equal opportunity briefings? Is there DoD policy requiring what materials should be made available for training purposes? Who is responsible for approving the material's content?

Answer: The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), which exercises oversight over DEOMI, has advised that DEOMI has never conducted an equal opportunity briefing that labeled Christian churches and Christian non-profit groups as hate groups, nor has it ever prepared or provided training material that included such labeling.

A full review of all DEOMI training materials was ordered in December 2013, including all non-Federal reference materials, to evaluate its appropriateness and effectiveness in delivering world-class equal opportunity education. From this review, it was determined there is benefit to continued use of non-Federal reference material in order to preserve the quality, breadth of perspective, and applicability through real-world situations for DEOMI-directed diversity education. Additionally, use of non-Federal reference material can help address inequalities or inconsistencies that can adversely affect the military workforce due to unlawful discriminatory practices.

Non-Federal entities used to inform DEOMI's training include, but is not limited to:

- Anti-Defamation League - www.adl.org
- Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism - www.hatemonitor.csusb.edu
- Know Gangs - www.knowgangs.com
- Political Research Associates - www.publiceye.org
- Southern Poverty Law Center - www.splcenter.org
- Teaching Tolerance - www.tolerance.org
- Multiple Textbooks, Articles, and Research studies

Department of Defense Directive 1350.2, "Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Program," identifies what materials should be made available for equal opportunity training (briefings) for all service members. The content of this training is approved locally by the respective commanding officers and heads of organizations.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

I want to follow up on my earlier discussion on the free exercise of religion - a right guaranteed in our constitution - and the Equal Opportunity Briefings conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) that have labeled Christian churches and Christian non-profits as hate groups.

Question 3: Has a review of DEOMI training materials been conducted? What material is considered non-federal reference material and could you provide me with a list of such sources that are used in the equal opportunity briefings? Is there DoD policy requiring what materials should be made available for training purposes? Who is responsible for approving the material's content?

Answer: A thorough review of Equal Opportunity briefings revealed that the well-intentioned use of privately-produced materials--specifically items produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center-- did indeed connect some faith-based organizations as extremist/hate groups. The Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs conducted a review of the Marine Corps' Military Equal Opportunity training in January of 2014. That review enabled the Marine Corps to identify and remove all non-federally-produced extremist/hate group reference material from its Equal Opportunity briefings.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

I want to follow up on my earlier discussion on the free exercise of religion - a right guaranteed in our constitution - and the Equal Opportunity Briefings conducted by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) that have labeled Christian churches and Christian non-profits as hate groups.

Question 4: Has a review of DEOMI training materials been conducted? What material is considered non-federal reference material and could you provide me with a list of such sources that are used in the equal opportunity briefings? Is there DoD policy requiring what materials should be made available for training purposes? Who is responsible for approving the material's content?

Answer: The Air Force understands that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) conducted a review of DEOMI's Equal Opportunity (EO) Advisor Course training materials on December 10-12, 2013 and that that review is complete. Further, we understand that OSD has ongoing reviews of other templates for individual blocks of EO instruction for use in the Services. These reviews will probably continue into 2015. As DEOMI falls under the supervision of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, I cannot address the full extent of their reviews, including what non-federal reference materials that may have been used in EO briefings.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 5: As your Services look to control the rising costs of military healthcare and benefits, what steps are you taking to ensure that our warriors and their families have ready access to the care they need - both upon return from deployment and during their transition from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system?

Answer: The care of its Soldiers and Family Members is one of the Army's highest priorities. For that reason, the Army established the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) for Family Members and the Soldier Centered Medical Home (SCMH) for Service Members. These programs are designed around one core principle: putting Warriors and Family Members first. The PCMH and SCMH are Army Medicine's gateways to influence the Lifespace where beneficiaries make decisions on the key determinants of health and wellness - sleep, activity, and nutrition. The PCMH and SCMH not only manage the total health of the Soldier and Family Member, but serve to ensure continuity, care coordination, and access to primary care. If a Soldier or Family Member cannot be seen at a Military Treatment Facility (MTF) within the time required by DOD's standards for access to care, they are promptly referred to our TRICARE Network partners. These standards include: seven calendar days for initial evaluation or for an exacerbation of existing behavioral health (BH) condition; 24 hours for Urgent Care; seven calendar days for routine care; and 28 calendar days for specialty care. TRICARE network partners are also required to meet the minimum standards and the U.S. Army Medical Command reviews compliance on a monthly basis.

The Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA) and the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) screen Soldiers returning from deployment within 30 days and 90-180 days, respectively, for health and deployment related problems. During this process, Soldiers are given enhanced access standards to streamline needed care in an efficient and effective manner. Recommendations for further evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment are documented as part of the PDHA/PDHRA process. Depending on the status and component of each Service Member, the methods for the provision of healthcare varies (direct care, network care, or transitional assistance management program through TRICARE). Soldiers within the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) work with the Veterans Administration (VA) to file applicable claims and conduct comprehensive VA exams. All Soldiers going through IDDES are given enhanced access to care in MTFs.

In FY13, the Army made significant progress across the IDDES by eliminating backlogs at the Medical Evaluation Board and the Physical Evaluation Board. The Army is now meeting timeliness goals for all stages of the IDDES process that it controls. The Army is also continuing to work with the VA to operate IDDES more efficiently so soldiers can receive the benefits they have earned.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 6: As your Services look to control the rising costs of military healthcare and benefits, what steps are you taking to ensure that our warriors and their families have ready access to the care they need - both upon return from deployment and during their transition from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system?

Answer: Our Sailors must be medically ready to meet their demanding responsibilities. Just as importantly, they need to be confident that their families have access to quality health care. As I travel and speak with our Sailors, I hear firsthand how important the health care benefit is to recruiting and retaining our men and women.

We have seen unprecedented advances in battlefield medicine during the last twelve years of war, and many of our wounded warriors are returning home with more severe and complicated injuries. I have had the honor of visiting many of these heroes in our medical treatment facilities. I see their spirit and determination, and I am inspired by the world-class care they are receiving from Navy Medicine. To support their recovery, our medical case managers work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure there is ongoing coordination of medical services and support. In addition, our Navy Safe Harbor program is responsible for coordinating the non-medical care of seriously wounded, ill or injured Sailors and their families. The program provides a lifetime of individually tailored assistance designed to optimize the success of the wounded warriors' recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration activities. Safe Harbor's goal is to return Sailors to duty, and when that's not possible, we work collaboratively with federal, state and local agencies and organizations to ensure the wounded warriors' successful transition out of military service.

We all understand that we must do everything we can to help slow the growth of health care costs in the Department of Defense. In addition to the DoD initiatives targeting efficiencies within the Defense Health Program, we must invest in health promotion and disease prevention to help drive costs down. In this regard, our 21st Century Sailor program emphasizes wellness and healthy lifestyles to help keep our Sailors fit and mission ready. Within the Navy, one of our key initiatives is Medical Home Port. This program, both at our medical treatment facilities and in the Fleet, provides efficient access to primary care services and specialists while also promoting responsible use of emergency room services.

Further, as part of the Transition Goals, Plans, Success (Transition GPS) curriculum, transitioning Sailors attend mandatory veterans benefits briefs, during which they learn to navigate resources available through the eBenefits and MyHealtheVet web sites, become more familiar with and better understand available VA health care services, and are informed about the Veterans Benefits Administration disability compensation claims process.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 7: As your Services look to control the rising costs of military healthcare and benefits, what steps are you taking to ensure that our warriors and their families have ready access to the care they need - both upon return from deployment and during their transition from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system?

Answer: The Marine Corps has initiated the Marine Centered Medical Home (MCMH) that will leverage all the positive aspects of the Medical Home model that both DoD and civilian healthcare organizations have embraced because it improves access to care, treatment, and medical outcomes while reducing costs. It is a garrison healthcare model that will positively affect Marines and their families while improving operational readiness. This initiative has been rolled out at pilot sites in Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune and will spread Marine Corps wide in the next few years. It is fully integrated with Navy Medicine's Homeport model. There is a concerted effort to ensure all the data gathered on Marines during the last decade of war is compiled in a central database that can be used to track Marines as they finish their active duty/reserve careers and transition into the VA system. The focus is to "keep faith with Marines and their families" for the rest of their lives.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Nunnelee for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 8: As your Services look to control the rising costs of military healthcare and benefits, what steps are you taking to ensure that our warriors and their families have ready access to the care they need - both upon return from deployment and during their transition from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system?

Answer: Even though we are facing budgetary pressures, the Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) is committed to ensuring access to care for our beneficiaries. AFMS Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) consistently exceed access standards set by law, achieving 95 percent access for Prime beneficiaries over the 12-month period ending July 2013. The AFMS Access to Care office provides multiple Access Improvement Seminars and Appointing system hands-on training courses along with monthly teleconferences with the goal of training MTF access managers on best practices and improvement opportunities. Our expectation is that the students will take the leading practices that are taught and apply them to their own MTFs to increase efficiency, thereby improving access, patient satisfaction, and most importantly, medical outcomes.

The primary target of the Access improvement courses is the Patient Centered Medical Home approach to primary care, but a great deal of time is also concentrated on specialty care and referral management practices. The Air Force Patient Centered Medical Home efforts have focused upon providing better patient to healthcare team communication, improved access, and the skillful management of acute and preventive health needs for all enrollees. The AFMS accomplishes this through enhanced access and a standardized team based approach to healthcare. Enhanced access practices incorporate the use of Behavioral Health Consultation Services, Medical Management, Telemedicine, Doctors of Pharmacy (Pharm D's), Independent Duty Medical Technicians and others, to route the most appropriate care to the patient in the timeliest manner. In addition, the Air Force has also instituted MiCare across the AFMS. MiCare is the Air Force's secure messaging solution allowing for secure and private communication between patients and their providers as well as between providers. If MTFs and their patients leverage this cutting-edge technology, access to professional medical care through both face-to-face and "virtual" encounters can be exponentially increased, while costs can be significantly reduced.

Deploying Service members complete a series of five Deployment Health Assessments at the following intervals (in accordance with the Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act): within 120 days prior to deployment, within 30 days prior to leaving theater or within 30 days of return, 3-6 months after return, 6-18 months after return, and 18-30 months after return.

Deployers complete an online health survey followed by a person-to-person interview with a trained healthcare provider. The purpose of the assessments is to identify deployment-related healthcare needs and facilitate further clinical evaluation.

To further enhance Tri-Service and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) communication, the Air Force is a stakeholder in the Interagency Coordination Committee. This team is actively involved in the Policy and Oversight, Community of Practice, and Comprehensive Plan Working Groups. Several pilots are in place. For example, in the Lead Coordinator pilot, one person on the existing care team serves as a central point of contact for the warrior and family, ensuring uninterrupted communication. In the Federal Care Management Tool pilot, we are to testing the viability of Department of Defense personnel sharing the Warrior's Comprehensive Care Plan with VA personnel on the same IT system.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 1: In addition, I welcome the each service to provide their own insight into the condition of their bachelor quarters, the maintenance challenges the services are facing now and in the future and the input they are receiving from the service members who reside in bachelor quarters.

Answer: Training, readiness and the quality of life for Soldiers remain the Army's top priorities. Although some Soldiers may live and work in aging facilities, the Army will continue to optimize the use of all available resources to improve facility conditions and provide quality facilities now and in the future. The Army's Facility Investment Strategy is the tool that will identify and validate facility conditions to determine priorities and utilization plans in support of facility requirements as the force structure stabilizes.

However, the fact is that as the Army draws down, we will have excess infrastructure, the upkeep of which will require us to take money from things like readiness and modernization. That is why the Army supports a new BRAC, so that we can focus our resources on taking care of the facilities we really need instead of paying for upkeep on infrastructure we don't.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 2: Although the Bipartisan Budget Act provided some relief in FY14 and FY15, I understand that it is challenging to find room in the Navy's budget for barracks construction and renovation projects after priority fleet requirements are funded. During our meeting on February 25, 2014, you mentioned the Navy's goal of providing adequate - rated Q1 and Q2 - barracks for the Navy's enlisted personnel by 2022. Is the Navy on track to meet its stated goal? Looking beyond the Navy's metrics and referencing your personal experiences and observations as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, how would you describe the conditions of the Navy's bachelor quarters? Are sailors mentioning the conditions of their barracks as one of their concerns?

Answer: The Navy is continuing to work toward Department of Defense's goal for the Services to achieve 90% "Adequate" (Q1/Q2) permanent party barracks. Our plan was to achieve this goal by 2022, but current funding levels have stalled our progress in this area.

Barracks conditions vary from Installation to Installation. As a result of the budget shortfall, we have approximately 260 barracks in "Inadequate" condition (Q3 or Q4). My personal opinion is that targeted funding that would allow the Navy to modernize, renovate and in some cases, provide new construction, would go a long way in improving the living conditions for our Sailors. I'm worried that if we don't address this shortfall now, it will only compound itself and become an unmanageable cost in the future.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 3: In addition, I welcome the each service to provide their own insight into the condition of their bachelor quarters, the maintenance challenges the services are facing now and in the future and the input they are receiving from the service members who reside in bachelor quarters.

Answer: Thanks to the support from Congress, we received over \$2.5 billion of military construction funding during the period of FY 2008-13 to build new and replace inadequate barracks. This funding represents nearly 13,000 rooms that will provide a better quality of life for our single Marines.

For the most part, Marines who live in these newly constructed barracks are satisfied with their quality of life and living standards. For Marines living in older bachelor housing, feedback turns positive after the renovation of formerly substandard and inadequate facilities.

The Marine Corps currently has approximately 9,400 substandard and inadequate rooms, mostly at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California; Marine Corps Base Hawaii and Marine Corps Base Japan. Ninety percent of the Marine Corps barracks inventory will be adequate by the end of FY2016 and the majority of these substandard and inadequate rooms will be eliminated through the completion of ongoing construction, repairs and renovation, and demolition projects.

In this current austere budget environment, maintaining adequate funding for sustainment and maintenance of all facilities will be a challenge. Lack of sustainment funding will result in the accelerated deterioration of our buildings. Restoring facilities back to their current condition will incur a "cost of neglect" from this accelerated degradation. However, to the greatest extent possible, the Marine Corps will prioritize sustainment and maintenance of barracks over other types of facilities. Additionally, we will need to focus on ensuring good stewardship of the barracks furnishings, providing maintenance and replacing over aged furnishings.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 4: In addition, I welcome the each service to provide their own insight into the condition of their bachelor quarters, the maintenance challenges the services are facing now and in the future and the input they are receiving from the service members who reside in bachelor quarters.

Answer: The Air Force goal is to eliminate inadequate unaccompanied housing. Currently 3,300 rooms in 62 of the total 939 Air Force-managed dormitories are in inadequate, but habitable, condition. Given the current budgetary constraints and an inventory with an average age of 35 years, maintenance requirements may outpace the projected funding available. In addition, reinvestment funds may not be available due to the need to protect readiness and maintain other capabilities in core missions.

Commanders and senior enlisted leaders at installations provide a variety of opportunities and venues for service members residing in unaccompanied housing to provide direct feedback regarding their quality of life. Base leadership establishes programs to receive inputs, address concerns, and identify ways to improve quality of life. Service members living in our unaccompanied housing have identified no critical issues impacting their quality of life.

Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 5: Suicide remains a serious problem that the services must address. What are your respective services doing to contribute to a reduction in suicide rates? Do you believe more could be done to decrease suicide rates and if so what would you recommend be done by your service? Have the services been working collaboratively to identify and standardize best practices for suicide prevention across the entire Department of Defense? What, if any, barriers to collaboration exist?

Answer: There are no barriers of collaboration that we know of. The Army employs a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to reduce suicides among Soldiers. Our ongoing efforts to reduce the incidence of suicide include: partnering with the National Institute of Mental Health on the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service Members (STARRS); expanding access to behavioral health services (embedding behavioral health teams in all active brigade combat teams), helping Soldiers improve their ability to cope with and mitigate stress (relationships, separation, deployments, financial pressures, work-related issues, etc.); continuing the use of "myPRIME," a confidential online alcohol and substance abuse tool that provides risk assessment and targeted education for remotely located, i.e., Reserve Component and deployed, Soldiers; expanding the random panel for military drug testing to include commonly abused prescription medications and drugs, such as hydrocodone, hydromorphone, benzodiazepines, and synthetic cannabinoids; and expanding Family Support Programs such as Strong Bonds, Military Family Life Consultants, Total Army Sponsorship Program, and Survivor Outreach Services.

We continue to exercise an aggressive training initiative to increase awareness and understanding of prevention and intervention skills. The Army has integrated suicide awareness training across the Force, deploying Mobile Training Teams, upon command direction, to train and certify military and Army Civilian leaders and first-line supervisors. To facilitate our leaders' roles in reducing the incidence of suicide, we have incorporated suicide prevention and intervention awareness training into our Commander and First Sergeant Courses. The Army continues to provide training kits and conduct training sessions at various locations to facilitate Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. We have developed specialized on-line training for our Suicide Prevention Program Managers in all three Components within the Army to enhance awareness of programs and available resources to support suicide prevention activities.

The Army National Guard and Army Reserve are funding full-time Suicide Prevention Program Manager Positions in each State, Territory, the District of Columbia, and across major commands to advise commanders and facilitate efforts to reduce risk and prevent suicides. Our Suicide Reduction Working Group provides a forum for stakeholders Army-wide to collaborate on

policies, education and training, services and resources, along with ongoing initiatives that mitigate high risk behaviors and incidences of suicide.

We strongly believe our aggressive promotion of "help-seeking" behaviors and concentrated efforts through the Ready and Resilient (R2) Campaign are contributing to the apparent reduction in the number of suicides for Calendar Year 2013. The R2 Campaign is designed to improve personal resilience through education and training that contribute to the mental, physical, and emotional strengthening of our Soldiers, Civilians and Families, thereby decreasing the incidence of suicides.

The Army continues effective collaboration and synchronization of our efforts with representatives from all the Services across the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Veteran Affairs. These efforts facilitate sharing and collaboration of best practices and promotion of effective DoD system-wide standardization, communication, and evaluation of suicide and risk reduction programs, policies and tools used to assess Soldiers' resilience and well-being. Additionally, the Army continues to foster partnerships with U.S. Army Public Health Command, Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service Members, and the Millennium Cohort study to enhance research and researcher-to-practitioner information sharing.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 6: Suicide remains a serious problem that the services must address. What are your respective services doing to contribute to a reduction in suicide rates? Do you believe more could be done to decrease suicide rates and if so what would you recommend be done by your service? Have the services been working collaboratively to identify and standardize best practices for suicide prevention across the entire Department of Defense? What, if any, barriers to collaboration exist?

Answer: Navy employs a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention to promote a sense of community, encourage open conversation about stress, and foster a culture supportive of seeking help. We emphasize resilience in training, messaging and communications, as well as clinical practice guidelines. We instill principles of Operational Stress Control in all of our programs' efforts to help Sailors proactively navigate stress and seek resources before crises occur. Our policy, training and communications strategies are informed by findings from regularly-conducted Navy suicide case reviews in order to develop targeted efforts to help Sailors build life skills, address the right stressors, champion leadership engagement, and promote bystander intervention.

More can be done to decrease suicide rates by constantly evaluating the findings of new research to ensure we use evidenced-based initiatives to save lives.

Navy meets monthly with the other Services to collaboratively identify and share best practices for suicide prevention across the entire Department of Defense. These meetings occur in multiple venues and at multiple levels, from the action officer level up to the flag and general officer level. All Services also collaborate regularly at the DoD level through the efforts of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO). One of the missions of the DSPO is to collect best practices from the Services and civilian entities and disseminate them throughout the DoD.

I know of no barriers to collaboration.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 7: Suicide remains a serious problem that the services must address. What are your respective services doing to contribute to a reduction in suicide rates? Do you believe more could be done to decrease suicide rates and if so what would you recommend be done by your service? Have the services been working collaboratively to identify and standardize best practices for suicide prevention across the entire Department of Defense? What, if any, barriers to collaboration exist?

Answer: The Marine Corps is taking many steps in reducing suicides within our ranks as well as increasing our ability to identify and offer treatment for high risk military personnel. First, the Marine Corps in January 2013 changed the Suicide Prevention and Response Program from a stand-alone program and placed it under the Community Counseling and Prevention Services Program along with Community Counseling and Combat and Operational Stress Control. Often individuals who are at risk for suicide are experiencing a range of behavioral issues and with the integration of our various programs this ensures our Marines are receiving all of the necessary services in a coordinated effort to address their behavioral health needs. Secondly, the Marine Corps is partnering with Navy Medicine to identify and reduce gaps in prevention and treatment. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2013 defines the full psychological health continuum; of medical and non-medical care offered on Marine Corps installations to Marines, attached Sailors, and their families; establishes clear lines of communication between all entities involved in these services; and leverages and augments existing systems.

Additionally, the Marine Corps has a series of other initiatives in the area of early detection assessment, prevention, and intervention in addressing suicide in the Marine Corps. The following are several initiatives currently being implemented:

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, the Marine Corps trained over 1,000 Marine Corps and Navy attorneys, chaplains, counselors, victim advocates, and prevention specialists in the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale and safety planning, which are gold standard tools for identifying and managing suicide risk. In FY2014, additional training will be conducted across the Corps extending the ability in the field to identify suicidal ideation and intervene quickly.
- The Marine Corps Community Counseling Program on installations worldwide increases access to care and assists Marines and their families in navigating the many support resources available. Community counseling, offers short term action oriented non-medical counseling services, staffed with licensed independent practitioners, who are able to care for children, adolescents, adults, families, and couple. In addition, counselors coordinate

care for clients and assist with the navigation between helping organizations, such as Navy Medicine.

- Recently, the Marine Corps has required reporting when a Marine has had a suicidal ideation (SI) or attempt (SA). This has enhanced data surveillance and facilitates ongoing care for At-Risk Marines following these events. FY2013, the Marine Intercept Program (MIP) was implemented to provide case management and wrap-around services for Marines who are identified as having suicidal ideation or have attempted suicide. The MIP is designed to immediately ensure that each Marine who has reported suicidal ideation and/or attempted suicide is actively engaged in care. Community Counseling Programs' licensed counselors communicate with the command and each Marine identified through a Serious Incident Report (SIR) and/or Personnel Casualty Report (PCR) for indications that a Marine has had a suicide attempt or suicidal ideation. Care coordination and regular safety monitoring is offered to the Marine and regular communication regarding the status of the Marine is offered to the command. The Community Counseling Program staff will ensure the Marine is able to access all levels of care as needed. Care coordination and safety monitoring will continue for a minimum of 90 days post (SIR/PCR)
- In FY2013, the Marine Corps enacted new reintegration and postvention initiatives. The reintegration plan is designed to educate commands on how to successfully reintegrate their Marine back into the unit following a suicide-related event. The Commander's postvention plan provides support to unit, family, and friends following a death by suicide. This is expected to reduce stigma and signal clear intent to stay faithful with our Marines following these suicide related events.
- One ongoing initiative in the Marine Corps is the annually required suicide prevention training for all Marines via 'Never Leave a Marine Behind' training. This training is peer led by trained Marines and delivered in small separate groups for Junior Marines, SNCOs, and NCOs. Additionally, Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) is designed to capture the most high-risk personnel and to provide the skills to prevent/mitigate stress injuries.
- Every battalion or equivalent command has a command appointed Suicide Prevention Program Officer (SPPO). The SPPO billet ensures policy compliance, appropriate messaging, and acts as the "eyes and ears" of the commanding officer's Suicide Prevention Program.
- The Marine Corps DSTRESS line, with worldwide capability, provides anonymous, 24/7 counseling services to any Marine, attached Sailor, or family member to speak to 'one of their own' about everyday stress or heavier life burdens. Since inception, DSTRESS has provided non-medical counseling services to over 19,000 Marines, attached Sailors, and family members. There have been 21 documented successfully interventions that ensured Marines received appropriate care.
- The Marine Corps has an aggressive and active research agenda that is investigating risk and protective factors of suicide and evaluation the latest evidence based approaches to assessment, prevention, and intervention.

The Marine Corps efforts to address the complex problem of suicide will continue. Reduction of stigma will continue to be a difficult problem to address. Stigma is prominent in the culture from which we draw our service members and perhaps made worse by dynamics inherent to military service: the *desire* to be excellent, to be mission ready, and to be self-efficacious. Still, we must

continue to send the message that asking for help is a sign of strength. We need to do this and continue to focus on prevention efforts targeting variables that feed into suicide risk/protective factors: interpersonal violence, alcohol and substance abuse, trauma, and financial stress.

A great deal of attention is being placed on the problem of suicide. It is clear that all of the services are very concerned for their service members. Collaboration is high among the services with many ongoing joint activities that are informing service-wide policies and programs. For example, the Memorandum of Understanding with Navy Medicine is one example of necessary collaboration, which defines the full psychological health continuum of medical and non-medical care offered on Marine Corps installations to Marines, attached Sailors, and their families; establishes clear lines of communication between all entities involved in these services; and leverages and augments existing systems. No specific barriers to collaboration have been identified by the Marine Corps.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 8: Suicide remains a serious problem that the services must address. What are your respective services doing to contribute to a reduction in suicide rates? Do you believe more could be done to decrease suicide rates and if so what would you recommend be done by your service? Have the services been working collaboratively to identify and standardize best practices for suicide prevention across the entire Department of Defense? What, if any, barriers to collaboration exist?

Answer: Suicide is one of the most challenging, complex issues Air Force leaders at all levels face. As a result, the Air Force Suicide Prevention program (AFSPP), an effective evidenced-based, leader-led, community program relies on 11 overlapping elements to meet this challenge. These elements can be grouped into three broad areas: Leadership and community, Education, and Protections for those under investigation. The core of these eleven elements is leadership involvement.

The AFSPP has received specific mention in the 2007 report by the Department of Defense (DoD) Task Force on Mental Health, the final report of the DoD Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces, the 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, and is listed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as an evidence based prevention program. The Air Force constantly seeks best practices for improvement in the AFSPP, engages in research and works cooperatively with our sister Services and the recently formed Defense Suicide Prevention Office to battle this difficult national issue.

In addition, the Air Force has emphasized a message of early help-seeking which is reflected in its suicide prevention training courses at all levels. As a result, we have achieved a balance that ensures leadership is engaged and all Airmen understand their responsibility to look out for one-another, identify warning signs and seek help. In addition, we have recently updated and trained our mental health clinicians on the Air Force Guide for Suicide Risk Assessment, Management and Treatment. This tool provides quick reference guidance for clinicians who care for our Services members in distress.

Most research and policy has tended to focus on high-risk populations such as suicidal individuals in clinical care. However, most suicides occur in individuals who are not under mental health care. The Air Force has begun plans to leverage its community-based approach and reinvigorate efforts in suicide prevention messaging. Continued strategic messaging via in-person discussions, e-mail, Public Service Announcements and social media focused on strength-

based messaging and the benefits of early help-seeking can be expanded to reach Airmen via multiple venues.

The gradually increasing suicide rate is a national problem. The Air Force teams with its sister services in regular discussions of best practices. Much of this work is done by the services' Suicide Prevention Program Managers in the Suicide and Risk Reduction Committee under the oversight of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO). Currently, the DSPO is reviewing the initiatives of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for alignment with service efforts. The Air Force believes interservice cooperation can be a model for our nation and does not see significant barriers in these positive working relationships.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Valadao for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 9: Sergeant Major Chandler, I understand several Brigades had their training rotations at the National Training Center cancelled last year due to sequestration. How did those cancellations impact the Army's readiness and how many Brigades will be able to participate in Combat Training Center rotations this year, especially at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin?

Answer: As a result of sequestration, in FY 2013, seven Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations were cancelled, which included five at the National Training Center (NTC, Fort Irwin, CA) and two at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC, Fort Polk, LA). These cancellations had significant impacts on Army readiness as units transition training from predominantly counter insurgency operations (COIN) to direct action (DA) in order to better execute the national security strategy. In essence, we dug ourselves a readiness hole out of which it will take us several years to climb. It poses a serious near-term readiness risk. As a result, the Army might be unable to provide the required amount of fully trained units to combatant commanders for crisis and contingency purposes. This increases the risk to both our national security end states and if committed, the likelihood of taking additional casualties.

This year, the Army will conduct 19 total CTC rotations (10 at the NTC, eight at JRTC, and one at the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center in Germany) focused on training 18 active duty Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) and one reserve component BCT. Of these 19 rotations, six will be COIN focused to prepare units for OEF operations; however, the remaining 13 will be conducted under direct action conditions.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 1: What are the impacts of recent sequestration and budget decreases to Army institutional training bases like Fort Benning, Georgia and Fort Gordon, Georgia?

Answer: Institutional training bases across the Army have been adjusting to sequestration and budget decreases along with the rest of the Army. Initial entry training and professional military education remain Army priorities even under sequestration. However, we have taken risk in other areas, such as functional/special skills training and training development. The Army prioritizes initial entry training and professional military education in order to build agile, adaptive Soldiers/leaders who can perform in the complex operational environments facing the Army.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 2: What impacts has the Army faced to training levels of divisional units like the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia?

Answer: The 3rd Infantry Division and its associated brigade combat teams and combat aviation brigade have been forced to train at levels much lower than necessary to meet combatant commander operational requirements. Over 80% of Army forces not slated to deploy will only train at the squad and platoon level as a result of the Budget Control Act. The Bipartisan Budget Agreement restored some of this funding to enable higher levels of training for some units; however, many at the battalion or brigade level will not be able to train to transition from counterinsurgency to decisive action operations (the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks).

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 3: Is the Army still pursuing cuts to college ROTC programs? If so, what criteria is it using to establish at-risk programs?

Answer: After 13 years of conflict and an impending reduction of end strength in a fiscally constrained environment, the Army is now faced with the challenge of how best to cultivate our future leaders in support of our country's defense. To better meet the needs of the Army 2020 and a reduced officer accession mission, the U.S. Army Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps (SROTC) must restructure and reduce the footprint of Army SROTC programs to focus on core and growth markets.

As directed by section 554 of the FY13 NDAA, GAO audited the extent to which the services' SROTC programs met production goals, established performance standards, conducted evaluations, had effective communication processes, and were subject to oversight. GAO recommended establishment of clearly defined performance measures, routine evaluations of programs and analysis of collected data to determine the need for SROTC programs.

The Army has now begun a process of evaluating SROTC programs on an annual basis against specific criteria provided to leaders of every college with a host program. Programs will be evaluated in the following five categories to assess program viability: production, quality, academic representation, geographic representation and cost. Beginning in June 2014, programs that fail to meet the established criteria will be informed they are on probation and considered for closure.

Programs that do not meet acceptable criteria will be on probation for one year (two years by exception). Programs on probation that continue to fail to meet retention criteria will be given notice that they will be closed two years hence. This allows for commissioning or other arrangements for the cadets enrolled in that program. Given the one-year probation and two-year notice of intent to close, no closures would occur before June 2017.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 4: As we draw down in Afghanistan, is the Army institutionalizing language training as part of its training base? If so, how?

Answer: One of the lessons the Army learned during operations in Afghanistan was the importance of providing all deploying Soldiers with a basic understanding of language and culture. The Army intends to build upon current pre-deployment training guidance for Southwest Asia by instituting the same training requirement for all deploying Soldiers regardless of the area of operations. All Soldiers will be required to complete Rapport (basic language and culture training), and one Soldier per platoon will be required to complete Headstart II (a longer more in depth program of language and culture training).

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 5: What role does the Army see for the National Guard in the future?

Answer: The Army National Guard and United States Army Reserve remain an integral component of the Total Force. I envision that we will continue to use both the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve to support the National Military Strategy and Combatant Commander requirements by drawing on the capabilities that best suits them: (1) dealing with predictable and infrequent deployments; (2) providing Title 10 and Title 32 support to local, State, and Federal authorities; and (3) providing operational and strategic depth.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 6: How does the Army plan to ensure a trained and ready operational reserve?

Answer: The Army plans to ensure units in both the Army Reserve and Army National Guard are trained and ready by providing resources that support the progressive development of unit readiness in conjunction with operational experiences through mobilizations and deployments at predictable intervals as part of the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model. Some of the critical training events that reserve component units participate in are: combat training centers as a maneuver force, opposing force, or combat support and combat service support element; overseas training exercises in support of combatant commander engagement initiatives; and domestic support training response exercises.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 7: I have heard of numerous situations where service members have committed crimes and charged with an alcohol related or substance abuse charge, which they have received reprimands like loss of rank etc...

Answer: The Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program (SAP) increases operational readiness and the health of the Marine Corps by providing timely access to evidence based substance misuse education, treatment and deterrence activities. The goal of SAP is to prevent and eliminate problematic substance use and to return Marines (Active and Reserve) and attached Sailors to full duty following substance use disorder treatment whenever consistent with mission requirements. SAP continues to implement standardized, evidenced-based practices across the continuum of addressing substance misuse related problems including prevention, education, early intervention, treatment, and follow-up care.

In 2013, each of the 17 Substance Abuse Counseling Centers received a three year accreditation for their continuum of substance abuse services through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The use of skilled professionals who utilize evidence-based practices provides Marines and attached Sailors with consistent, high quality care. Recognizing the complexity of the combat experience on overall health, each Substance Abuse Counseling Centers treatment team utilizes a licensed independent practitioner (LIP). The LIP is a licensed mental health professional and certified addictions counselor who provides comprehensive screenings ensuring the appropriate level of care is offered. In addition to substance use specific information, the LIP assesses for the likelihood of traumatic brain injury, suicide risk, mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Our Substance Abuse Counselors provide comprehensive counseling services including: clinical case management, individual, and group therapy. Referrals to Navy Medical and military treatment facilities are made when treatment is required for moderate to severe substance abuse disorders. When a Marine or attached Sailor has completed a higher level of care and is preparing to return to his unit, counselors provide case management to assure a smooth transition and connection to appropriate follow-up care.

Specifically in training, PRIME for Life (PFL) is an early intervention evidence based education program targeting substance misuse. PFL provides Marines with the ability to self-assess high-risk behaviors and influence changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. As of 4 March 2014, 5,709 Marines have completed the PFL program since its inception in April 2012.

In regards to deterrence of substance abuse and alcohol abuse, SAP uses mandatory random alcohol screening in the Marine Corps. The Alcohol Screening Program was fully implemented

in August 2013 to deter alcohol use for Marines reporting to a duty station. All Marines are tested semi-annually for being under the influence of alcohol while in a duty status. Any Marine that is determined to have an alcohol related incident (AM) must complete the PFL 16 hour course. Rates of alcohol use for Marines reporting to duty status have been low. To test for illicit drugs and misuse of prescription drugs, the Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) utilizes mandatory random urinalysis testing. All Marines, regardless of rank, are tested at a minimum of one time a year. Any Marine that tests positive for prescription drugs must complete the Medical Review Officer process to determine if the use was "wrongful." If it is determined "wrongful" use, the Marine is processed for administrative separation. All Marines who test positive for drug use are required to be screened for drug dependency. All Marines who tested positive for illicit drug use must be processed for administrative separation from the USMC. For FY2013, there was only a 0.52 percent positive test rate before medical review.

Other programs that the Marine Corps has been using to target risky alcohol misuse or substance abuse are ongoing prevention awareness campaigns such as Red Ribbon Week, Prescription Drug Take Back, topical Public Service Announcements, and Anti-Drug media tools.

Additionally, Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) is designed to capture the most high-risk personnel and to provide the skills to prevent/mitigate stress injuries. Educating Marines to the risks of alcohol and the signs and symptoms of the abuse of alcohol extends our efforts to mitigate the impact of alcohol use.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 8: What programs are you providing or promoting that help service members and especially younger members cope with alcohol or substance abuse issues? Are these programs mandatory?

Answer: The Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program (SAP) increases operational readiness and the health of the Marine Corps by providing timely access to evidence based substance misuse education, treatment and deterrence activities. The goal of SAP is to prevent and eliminate problematic substance use and to return Marines (Active and Reserve) and attached Sailors to full duty following substance use disorder treatment whenever consistent with mission requirements. SAP continues to implement standardized, evidenced-based practices across the continuum of addressing substance misuse related problems including prevention, education, early intervention, treatment, and follow-up care.

In 2013, each of the 17 Substance Abuse Counseling Centers received a three year accreditation for their continuum of substance abuse services through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The use of skilled professionals who utilize evidence-based practices provides Marines and attached Sailors with consistent, high quality care. Recognizing the complexity of the combat experience on overall health, each Substance Abuse Counseling Centers treatment team utilizes a licensed independent practitioner (LIP). The LIP is a licensed mental health professional and certified addictions counselor who provides comprehensive screenings ensuring the appropriate level of care is offered. In addition to substance use specific information, the LIP assesses for the likelihood of traumatic brain injury, suicide risk, mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Our Substance Abuse Counselors provide comprehensive counseling services including: clinical case management, individual, and group therapy. Referrals to Navy Medical and military treatment facilities are made when treatment is required for moderate to severe substance abuse disorders. When a Marine or attached Sailor has completed a higher level of care and is preparing to return to his unit, counselors provide case management to assure a smooth transition and connection to appropriate follow-up care.

Specifically in training, PRIME for Life (PFL) is an early intervention evidence based education program targeting substance misuse. PFL provides Marines with the ability to self-assess high-risk behaviors and influence changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. As of 4 March 2014, 5,709 Marines have completed the PFL program since its inception in April 2012.

In regards to deterrence of substance abuse and alcohol abuse, SAP uses mandatory random alcohol screening in the Marine Corps. The Alcohol Screening Program was fully implemented

in August 2013 to deter alcohol use for Marines reporting to a duty station. All Marines are tested semi-annually for being under the influence of alcohol while in a duty status. Any Marine that is determined to have an alcohol related incident (AR1) must complete the PFL 16 hour course. Rates of alcohol use for Marines reporting to duty status have been low. To test for illicit drugs and misuse of prescription drugs, the Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) utilizes mandatory random urinalysis testing. All Marines, regardless of rank, are tested at a minimum of one time a year. Any Marine that tests positive for prescription drugs must complete the Medical Review Officer process to determine if the use was "wrongful." If it is determined "wrongful" use, the Marine is processed for administrative separation. All Marines who test positive for drug use are required to be screened for drug dependency. All Marines who tested positive for illicit drug use must be processed for administrative separation from the USMC. For FY2013, there was only a 0.52 percent positive test rate before medical review.

Other programs that the Marine Corps has been using to target risky alcohol misuse or substance abuse are ongoing prevention awareness campaigns such as Red Ribbon Week, Prescription Drug Take Back, topical Public Service Announcements, and Anti-Drug media tools.

Additionally, Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) is designed to capture the most high-risk personnel and to provide the skills to prevent/mitigate stress injuries. Educating Marines to the risks of alcohol and the signs and symptoms of the abuse of alcohol extends our efforts to mitigate the impact of alcohol use.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 9: What are you doing specifically to ensure that those who have left and are leaving your branch of service have access to civilian job training, technical schools or furthering their education at a University?

Answer: The Army has worked and continues working to establish partnerships with employers linking transitioning Soldiers to technical training opportunities, career development experiences, and meaningful employment prior to their transition from active duty. Pre-apprenticeship and internship programs established at many installations have provided transitioning Soldiers with the technical training and the employment skills and abilities necessary to compete for jobs in the civilian sector. Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, has instituted several effective pilot programs. For example, Joint Base Lewis-McChord worked with the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters to establish pre-apprenticeship programs in welding and heating, ventilation and air conditioning. These programs are expanding to other installations, resulting in well-paying jobs for Soldiers immediately after transition from active duty. All transitioning Soldiers at a minimum are counseled on the use of Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits for post-secondary/technical training programs and are shown how to access the list of Department of Veterans Affairs approved apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training programs.

The Army has also added 62 additional Education Counselors to specifically counsel transitioning Soldiers who elect to participate in the two-day Accessing Higher Education track. The two-day track goes into further detail on applying to higher education institutions and using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. These Education Counselors are in addition to the Army Continuing Education System Counselors located at state-side and overseas installations who counsel active duty Soldiers daily on their education and use of Tuition Assistance. The Tuition Assistance program allows Soldiers to use up to \$4,500 annually to further their education at nationally and regionally accredited post-secondary institutions.

The Army is committed to ensuring that all transitioning Soldiers are aware of the resources and tools available to them in order to achieve their individual transition goal, whether it is employment, job or technical training, or accessing higher education.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 10: What are you doing specifically to ensure that those who have left and are leaving your branch of service have access to civilian job training, technical schools or furthering their education at a University?

Answer: Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online and the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program support Sailors in obtaining civilian credit for skills gained while on active duty. We also fund a range of educational opportunities that enhance post-Navy job ready skills through off-duty education program. Free access is granted to top-of-the-line online career goals assessment, college readiness assessments, and developmental skills contributing to a 94 percent pass rate for Sailors who enroll in courses. About 20 percent of users earn an associate, bachelor, or master's degree each year. We currently fund 100 percent of tuition and fees for these courses, up to 16 semester hours per year. All formal training, and its American Council on Education (ACE) recommended college-level equivalent, are documented on a Joint Services Transcript (JST), recognized by thousands of colleges and universities around the country, which accelerates time-to-completion by reducing the number of courses required for graduation. Additionally, we maintain a robust worldwide testing network allowing Sailors to earn credit-by-examination, further accelerating their graduation dates.

Prior to transition, and as part of the Veteran's Employment Initiative and Veteran's Opportunity to Work Act of 2011, Sailors are required to participate in the Transition Assistance Program Goals, Plans, Success (TAP GPS), which provides guidance for successful transition to civilian life. The curriculum includes resume building and job search techniques; veteran's benefits briefing; post-military budgeting; and information on how skills translate into the civilian workforce. Approximately 90 percent of Sailors agreed, or strongly agreed, this program was beneficial in gaining information and skills needed to better plan for transition. They may also attend strongly-promoted courses that assist them in enrolling in accredited universities, obtaining technical training, or developing entrepreneurial skills in a course presented by the Small Business Administration.

Extensive counseling networks at over 30 locations worldwide, and on the world-wide web, inform Sailors about vocational and educational options finally, all Navy members as they transition out of the service are informed about and encouraged to take advantage of their GI Bill education benefits, and are promised decades of maintenance of their service-obtained educational records.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 11: What are you doing specifically to ensure that those who have left and are leaving your branch of service have access to civilian job training, technical schools or furthering their education at a University?

Answer: Our transition assistance program, which includes all the modules and training opportunities required by the VOW Act and published DoD guidance, provides all Marines three days of employment skills training offered by the Department of Labor and provides them ready access to assistance from American Job Centers once they return to civilian life. For those Marines interested in higher education we have a two day training course that walks them through selecting and applying to a college. We provide a two day Career and Technical Training course offered through the Department of Veterans Affairs to those Marines seeking post-service technical school. As well, we provide exposure to apprenticeship and credentialing while in service.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 12: What are you doing specifically to ensure that those who have left and are leaving your branch of service have access to civilian job training, technical schools or furthering their education at a University?

Answer: We are meeting the requirements of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act and the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) in accordance with Department of Defense policy. The VOW Act mandates that all Airmen participate in pre-separation counseling, the Veterans Affairs benefits briefings, and the Department of Labor Employment Workshop (unless exempt). VEI directs the mandatory components of the transition goals, plans, and success core curriculum, which includes a transition overview, resilient transitions, the military to civilian skills crosswalk, personal financial planning, and Capstone.

Airmen also have the opportunity to attend the Accessing Higher Education and/or Career Technical Training Seminars, which focus on the process of applying for, financing and attending civilian job training, technical training and post-secondary education colleges and universities.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 13: How many programs are available for veterans to connect with private companies in order to obtain a job? Have you ever thought about consolidating programs to make it easier on employers and service members?

Answer: A variety of civic, public and private organizations engaged in tremendous efforts in 2014 through pledges to assist transitioning Soldiers and close the skills gap in the labor, trade, health, Information Technology (IT) and transportation career fields. To date, the Army is participating in 10 credentialing and apprenticeship efforts that directly impact the immediate skill gap of the Army talent pool that industry relies on to fill employment requirements. The Soldier for Life program collaborated with many organizations to provide solutions to facilitate employment opportunities and set several industries on a positive path to workforce solutions. A few of those organizations and programs include: the White House IT program; National Association of Manufacturers and the Manufacturing Institute; the General Electric Get Skills to Work program; the Department of Transportation Commercial Drivers License initiative; Helmets to Hardhats; General Electric Healthcare Certification and Employment; The White House Emergency Medical Technician Credentialing program; the Veteran's Upward Bound Prep Program; the International Union of Painters Allied Trades Veteran Apprenticeship Program; the Laborers' International Union of North America Construction Craft Laborer Program; and the International Electricians Veteran Apprenticeship Program. These programs are tailored to specific industry skill requirements and, in general, cannot combine in order to make it easier for Employers and Soldiers-they are unique to each of their own industries. The Army has and will continue to collaborate with these organizations and programs to deliver a national effort that connects transitioning Active Component, National Guard, Reserve, and Retired Soldiers with skilled training and quality career opportunities in trade industries. These programs are designed to help Soldiers successfully transition back into civilian life by offering: time-served credit in specific skilled career paths; equal trade skill credit for training received; and/or basic licensing credit for similar skilled-trade experiences. This provides a better connection for transitioning Soldiers to skilled trade opportunities. The Army leverages several web-based platforms to consolidate programs and streamline efficiency, allowing employers and transitioning Soldiers to connect to career opportunities. The Army promotes the above named programs through various social media platforms and websites.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 14: How many programs are available for veterans to connect with private companies in order to obtain a job? Have you ever thought about consolidating programs to make it easier on employers and service members?

Answer: There are numerous organizations with programs designed to connect veterans with private companies in order to obtain a job. Navy does not maintain a job database for employers/Sailors, but refers them to the Veterans Job Bank, which was identified by the Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force as the single portal website.

We support the joint DOD-VA-DOL initiative to consolidate federal veteran employment information technology systems into a single veteran employment portal. The Veterans Job Bank was chosen as the best resource and on December 14, 2013, was moved to the Employment Center on the Department of Veterans Affairs eBenefits website. This step integrated, in one self-service location, employment-related information and tools through which service members, veterans and their families can access a military skills translator, résumé builder, and job search tools, as well as employment opportunities posted by employers. Future capabilities will also allow employers to directly access veterans' resumes.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 15: How many programs are available for veterans to connect with private companies in order to obtain a job? Have you ever thought about consolidating programs to make it easier on employers and service members?

Answer: While there are many ways, both governmental and non-governmental, that Marines may connect with employers, such as job fairs, websites, social media, and Reserve Muster, we encourage Marines in transition to use our Marine For Life network to find opportunities, including employment and education. By connecting with other transitioning and veteran Marines and supporters, our transitioning Marines can build relationships that lead to opportunities. Our Marine for Life representatives are located through the nation.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 16: How many programs are available for veterans to connect with private companies in order to obtain a job? Have you ever thought about consolidating programs to make it easier on employers and service members?

Answer: We are meeting the requirements of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act and the Veterans Employment Initiative in accordance with Department of Defense policy. The VOW Act mandates that all Airmen participate in pre-separation counseling, the Veterans Affairs benefits briefings, and the Department of Labor Employment Workshop (unless exempt). VEI directs the mandatory components of the transition goals, plans, and success core curriculum, which includes a transition overview, resilient transitions, the military to civilian skills crosswalk, personal financial planning, and Capstone. All known available employment opportunities, whether they are local employers or employment opportunities with large nationwide employers, are provided to each separating or retiring Airmen through our local Airman and Family Readiness Centers or are posted to the Air Force Transition Assistance Program website.

At the Department of Defense level, in support of the Joining Forces and Veterans Employment Initiative, efforts are currently underway to develop a single portal where job announcements are provided, members can upload resumes, and potential employers can access veterans.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 17: Are you coordinating with other branches and government agencies to make sure that programs are working?

Answer: The Army works very closely with the offices of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, Office of the Secretary of Defense Transition to Veterans Program Office, Defense Manpower Data Center and other Army transition stakeholders (e.g., Installation Management Command) to coordinate and synchronize the delivery and improvement of transition services. Additionally, we share tactics, techniques and procedures with the other Services on a regular basis.

One example is the Office of the Secretary of Defense's monthly rollout plan that synchronizes Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor briefings with Army transition services at state-side and overseas installations based on estimated workload or throughput.

A second example is the cross-checking conducted at various levels that is necessary to ensure Army policy is consistent with Office of the Secretary of Defense policy.

We also coordinate with First Army, Army National Guard, and United States Army Reserve leadership to refine Reserve Component transition processes and procedures. Finally, the Army's Soldier for Life office coordinates with government organizations such as the Veterans Affairs Office of Economic Opportunity, United States Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Small Business Administration as well as non-governmental agencies to develop employment outreach opportunities and facilitate a smooth transition for Soldiers and their Families who are reintegrating into their communities.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 18: Are you coordinating with other branches and government agencies to make sure that programs are working?

Answer: Yes; Navy is currently working with the other military branches, the Department of Defense Transition to Veteran's Program Office, and our partner agencies on various executive committees and working groups. This includes efforts to capture performance measures to ensure we are continuing to improve our program delivery, as well as best practices.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 19: Are you coordinating with other branches and government agencies to make sure that programs are working?

Answer: Through the DoD and in accordance with the national level Memorandum of Understanding, we maintain close working relationships with the Departments of Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, Education, the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management to provide coordinated services to transitioning Marines. Surveys are administered to assess satisfaction with the transition readiness seminar.

Marines are required to take the Department of Labor Employment Workshop and the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Briefs I and II. Additionally Marines have the option to attend one of three additional two-day tracks outside of TRS for hands-on/indepth application to assist with Career Readiness that is offered with the help of other government agencies, such as the Career/Technical Training facilitated by Veterans Affairs staff and the Entrepreneurship option that is facilitated by the Small Business Administration.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 20: Are you coordinating with other branches and government agencies to make sure that programs are working?

Answer: The Air Force along with all other military branches work very closely with Office of the Secretary of Defense Transition to Veterans Program Office as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, and Small Business Administration to assess the performance and effectiveness of the redesigned Transition Assistance Program.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 21: What can we do to help? With the recently announced restructuring from the Secretary of Defense more soldiers will be moving to civilian jobs and we want to make sure they don't run into a brick wall.

Answer: The committee can best serve our transitioning Soldiers by ensuring the Transition Assistance program provides as much latitude as possible and is fully funded. A "cookie-cutter" type program that makes no differentiation between a transitioning medical doctor and a truck driver is not a well-focused program. The ability to identify an at-risk population based on age, Military Occupational Specialty, military experience, and nature of transition (e.g. involuntary separation due to force shaping) and focus resources on that population will produce the best results.

Transitioning Soldiers may need a higher priority of access to apprenticeships and employment skills training and a higher level of support to include individualized attention and/or reasonable accommodation during the transition process. The transition services program is limited in scope without financial, education, and transition counselors. All three types of counselors provide essential services making the transition program whole. A fully funded program will allow transitioning Soldiers to meet VOW requirements and achieve education goals or obtain meaningful employment.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 22: What can we do to help? With the recently announced restructuring from the Secretary of Defense more soldiers will be moving to civilian jobs and we want to make sure they don't run into a brick wall.

Answer: In addition to your continued strong support for our transition assistance, education and credentialing programs, your ongoing efforts to educate civilian employers remain critical in assisting Sailors in making a smooth transition to civilian life. Employers must clearly understand the value proposition - that hiring a veteran makes sound business sense. Highly qualified Sailors possess all the attributes of the most sought after civilian employees. Sailors transitioning to civilian life bring exceptional training, leadership, critical skill sets, and proven performance, to local communities, and are infinitely capable of adding value to any organization.

Efforts to further spread ownership for hiring veterans to all federal government agencies are also appreciated to increase awareness, not only among private companies, but across the federal government, as well.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 23: What can we do to help? With the recently announced restructuring from the Secretary of Defense more soldiers will be moving to civilian jobs and we want to make sure they don't run into a brick wall.

Answer: We thank the Congress for its continued support of Marines and their families as they transition to civilian life. Currently the Department of Veterans Affairs is leading an effort to create a single portal for transitioning Service members to connect with government and non-government employers and we believe that continued congressional support of that effort will provide an enduring capability.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Graves for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 24: What can we do to help? With the recently announced restructuring from the Secretary of Defense more soldiers will be moving to civilian jobs and we want to make sure they don't run into a brick wall.

Answer: We are working hard to ensure that Airmen and their families affected by restructuring and force management decisions receive the best transition assistance possible. We encourage the Congress to continue advocating for veterans programs that provide the jobs and opportunities to gain meaningful employment and keep their families strong.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 1: What impacts are these constrained budgets having on your respective Services' Family Programs?

Answer: Family Programs are an investment in the Army's most valuable asset — our people. The Army is committed to providing Soldiers and Families a quality of life commensurate with their service, as well as being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

With the restructuring of the Army and the current austere fiscal climate, the future direction for military Family programs will not change. The Army continues to review Soldier and Family programs to ensure the most efficient delivery of services, where and when they are needed most. Resources will reflect changes in the number of Soldiers and Families served, but there will be no impact to the quality of the programs.

We have statutory requirements, operational imperatives, and a moral obligation to provide a balanced array of services to Soldiers, civilians, and Families that meet the unique demands of a military lifestyle, foster life skill competencies, strengthen and sustain physical and mental fitness and resiliency, and promote strong and ready Army communities. Based on the clearly demonstrated link between soldier family programs and readiness and readiness and resilience, we will sustain the full spectrum of programs and services that help Soldiers and Families meet the most challenging aspects of the military lifestyle. However, if the Budget Control Act spending limits continue, the Army will face increasingly difficult fiscal decisions.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 2: What impacts are these constrained budgets having on your respective Services' Family Programs?

Answer: The Air Force is committed to providing the best support to build and maintain ready and resilient Airmen and families. Under constrained budgets, it is more challenging to maintain programs at previously funded levels; which has caused some reduction to programs. With fewer fiscal resources, the Air Force prioritizes Airman and family support programs to focus on the most needed programs. Our strategy to meet the evolving demographics and demands under funding challenges is to tailor services, where appropriate, and capitalize on community resources to gain efficiencies if possible. There is no question we have and will continue to reduce availability of Family Programs under these constrained budgets. Priority funding will go to programs that directly affect Readiness.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 3: I have noticed at Fort Benning, is that the declining budgetary resources have affected service contracts causing Soldiers to pick up additional duties; do you expect this to continue in the future and are other services doing this as well?

Answer: As a result of the current fiscal environment and ongoing budgetary constraints, the Army has had to make tough decisions about prioritization in order to accomplish its missions. In some cases, Soldiers have been temporarily performing functions that were previously performed by civilian or contractor personnel.

As we move forward in shaping the force of the future, manpower decisions may require military personnel to temporarily perform tasks and duties that were previously performed by civilians or contractors. The Army intends to analyze functions—especially installation and training functions, as well as logistics support for major weapons systems—and assess them for permanent conversion to performance by military personnel as part of this effort. In such cases, these duties will be performed by Soldiers on either a permanent or temporary basis in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 1100.22 "Policy and Procedures for Determining Workforce Mix" (April 2010).

By temporary I mean that the job being done is not the permanent assignment for the Soldiers. Rather, units would be assigned to perform tasks and they would rotate Soldiers performing the tasks. The tasks would be consistent with the Military Occupational Specialty assigned to the Soldiers. In this way we exercise critical command and control, maintain readiness, and allow Soldiers to exercise planning skills required in combat operations. It also allows for units to cycle through required readiness training while other units perform support operations.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 4: I have noticed at Fort Benning, is that the declining budgetary resources have affected service contracts causing Soldiers to pick up additional duties; do you expect this to continue in the future and are other services doing this as well?

Answer: Recent budgetary constraints, particularly sequestration in FY13, caused the Navy to reduce service contract delivery in some non-mission critical areas (e.g., building cleaning, grounds keeping).

Consistent with DoD Instruction 1100.22, "Policy and Procedures/or Determining Workforce Mix" (April 2010), tasks that are not military essential in nature must be designated for government civilian personnel, or contract performance where appropriate. Exceptions will be based upon a demonstrated and documented military need. Services receive guidance from DoD Instruction 1100.22 for the criteria to determine appropriateness of military personnel utilization.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 5: I have noticed at Fort Benning, is that the declining budgetary resources have affected service contracts causing Soldiers to pick up additional duties; do you expect this to continue in the future and are other services doing this as well?

Answer: The intent of the Department of Navy contract services initiative is not to transfer the responsibilities to Marines or Civilian Marines. The Marine Corps will work to achieve contract efficiencies wherever possible but base commanders may be asked to prioritize requirements based on the most pressing needs of Marines.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 6: I have noticed at Fort Benning, is that the declining budgetary resources have affected service contracts causing Soldiers to pick up additional duties; do you expect this to continue in the future and are other services doing this as well?

Answer: Yes. Budgetary limitations and instability will be a fact of life for the foreseeable future. While both the Air Force and Department of Defense are taking steps to mitigate these challenges, there is no doubt the current environment will impact existing services. Each military service will make those decisions based on their budgets and priorities to support their mission requirements.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 7: I am very concerned about the employment issues facing spouses, particularly due to the frequent rotation of the service members. What initiatives have been put in place, including civilian opportunities to assist with employment for military spouses during the relocation process?

Answer: Employment Readiness Program (ERP) Managers have new resources available for spouses, such as federal resume certification, Passport Career, and Virtual Career Library. Passport Career is an online country-specific career service with local salary and benefits information. It includes an international job and internship portal with over 1,000 jobs linked to over 90,000 employers in 203 countries, translated into over 50 languages. The Virtual Career Library is a 3D digital career library that features over 6,000 pages of comprehensive job search, education, and career guidance resources. In addition, the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Spouse Education and Career Opportunities website offers education and career guidance. Finally, the Military Spouse Employment Partnership has 228 partner businesses dedicated to hiring military spouses. Spouses may contact their local ERP managers directly for employment assistance.

Installation hiring events have increased with ERP Managers, Army Career and Alumni Program Managers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce jointly hosting employment summits at Army installations. The first hiring event was held at Fort Bliss, with Forts Bragg, Campbell, Hood, and Henning scheduled for future events in fiscal year 2014.

In January, the Office of Personnel Management proposed a modification to the tenure rules for career-conditional employees (like many military spouses) setting tenure at three years of total creditable service, rather than three years of substantially continuous service. Under the old rule, a spouse (or other civil service employee) who left Federal service for more than 30 days had to re-start the 3-year period to obtain tenure. Although we are awaiting the final rule, this change was initiated by an Army Family Action Plan recommendation.

Executive Order (EO) 13473 (Non-competitive Appointing Authority for Certain Military Spouses) permits non-competitive appointments for spouses whose sponsors undergo permanent change of station moves. EO 12721 (Eligibility of Overseas Employees for Non-competitive Appointments) and the Military Spouse Preference Program allow Family members non-competitive appointments to competitive positions.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 8: I am very concerned about the employment issues facing spouses, particularly due to the frequent rotation of the service members. What initiatives have been put in place, including civilian opportunities to assist with employment for military spouses during the relocation process?

Answer: Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) provide extensive resources for family members to assist in overcoming challenges faced by frequent relocations, geographic isolation and high spouse unemployment rates. The Family Employment Readiness Program (FERP) assists military spouses in obtaining employment and maintaining a career, particularly as they are impacted by the changes in the economy, labor market conditions and military lifestyle. FFSCs offer a variety of employment and relocation workshops and seminars for all stages of the military lifecycle.

Employment Support:

- Portable Careers for Military Families on the Move
- Starting Your Own Business
- Job Search Strategies
- Networking

Relocation Assistance:

- Smooth Move
- Moving overseas
- Welcome Aboard
- New Spouse Orientation

Spouse employment information is a key component of all Relocation Assistance workshops. FFSC Relocation and FERP Consultants work closely together to determine the types of employment, licensure and certification assistance would be beneficial to relocating spouses and ensure the information is widely disseminated. Relocation Consultants also facilitate "warm handoffs" to the FERP Consultant for those spouses who receive individual relocation support.

Command Sponsors are required to attend mandatory sponsorship training which covers the spouse employment program and employment resources. The Command Sponsor is a member of the command assigned to facilitate a smooth transition and assimilation of a relocating Sailor into the new command. This information is also provided to Command Sponsors for inclusion in Welcome Aboard packages.

FFSC Employment Consultants facilitate Installation Employment Fairs and are also trained to

help relocating Sailors and family members utilize DOD, Civilian and community based initiatives to assist in employment preparation.

DOD Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) office initiatives include My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) and the Military Spouse Employment Program (MSEP).

- MyCAA provides financial assistance of up to \$4000 for spouses of E1-E5, W1-W2, and O1-O2 service members. The funding must be used to obtain an Associate Degree, occupational license or a credential. In the first half of FY14, over 1700 Navy spouses utilized the program.
- MSEP is a targeted recruitment and employment solution for spouses and companies that partners with Fortune 500 Plus companies and all military services; provides human resource (HR) managers with recruitment solutions for military spouses; prepares military spouses to become competitive, "job ready" applicants; and connects military spouses with employers seeking the essential 21st century workforce skills and attributes they possess.
- SECO community initiatives include Career OneStop centers, Small Business Alliance and referrals to local Hiring Fairs such as Hiring Our Heroes/Military Spouse Hiring Fairs, Hero 2 Hired and other White House Joining Forces and Military Spouse Employment Partners (i.e. Department of Labor, the Railway Industry, Bank of America, etc.)

Fleet and Family Support also partners with the DOD SECO office and other Service Branches to provide web based training directly to relocating spouses. The next training entitled "Searching for a Job Before, During, and After a PCS Move" will occur on 19 March 2014.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 9: I am very concerned about the employment issues facing spouses, particularly due to the frequent rotation of the service members. What initiatives have been put in place, including civilian opportunities to assist with employment for military spouses during the relocation process?

Answer: The Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP) emphasizes a proactive approach for military spouses and other dependent family members in order to formulate informed career and educational choices by providing employment related referral services, career and skill assessments, career coaching, job search guidance, portable career opportunities, and education center referrals/guidance. We recently published a Marine Corps Order to update FMEAP. FMEAP provides coaching and training in the following key areas:

- o Interview Techniques
- o Resume and Cover Letter Writing
- o The Federal Application Process
- o Salary Negotiations
- o Appropriate Dress
- o Staff-Assisted Computerized Job Searches
- o Skills and Personality Assessments
- o One-on-one Career Coaching
- o Education, Training and Volunteer Opportunities
- o Entrepreneur Business Opportunities

In addition, the Marine Corps encourages spouses to seek employment with Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) employers who agree to offer transferrable, portable career opportunities to relocating military spouse employees.

We also inform spouses about the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Scholarship, which provides up to \$2000 per year (maximum of \$4,000) for military spouses (E-1 to E-5, W-1 & W-2, and O-1 & O-2) to pursue licenses, certificates, certifications or Associate's Degrees necessary for gainful employment in high demand, high growth Portable Career Fields and Occupations.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 10: I am very concerned about the employment issues facing spouses, particularly due to the frequent rotation of the service members. What initiatives have been put in place, including civilian opportunities to assist with employment for military spouses during the relocation process?

Answer: Airman & Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC) at the installation level provide critical employment preparation assistance for spouses such as resume writing, networking, and interviewing skills. The Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) is a joint effort between Fortune 500 PLUS companies, the military services, and the Coast Guard. This joint effort led by OSD directly addresses the spouse employment pillar of the First Lady's "Joining Forces" initiative. The President's Strengthening Our Military Families (PSD-9) Report, signed in January 2011, specifically cites this planned partnership. Our A&FRC staff members develop and maintain a collaborative relationship with MSEP Program and Account Managers by promoting MSEP marketing materials, referring spouses to MSEP, tracking referrals and coordinating with MSEP staff for partner participation in installation job fairs, etc. As spouses relocate from one installation to another, they continue to receive support from installation A&FRC staff as well as access to MSEP resources.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 11: The Army restructuring their Brigade Combat Teams, what steps is the Army taking to address relocation issues?

Answer: The Army is making every effort to support the needs of Soldiers and their families while maintaining the readiness of Army formations. Soldiers impacted by Brigade Combat Team (BCT) reorganizations are assigned in accordance with current Army Regulations and policies, with special consideration for individual circumstances, including but not limited to Joint Domicile (Married Army Couples Program), Exceptional Family Member Program, High School Senior Stabilization, and/or Reenlistments Options.

To the maximum extent possible the Army strives to exhaust every possible option prior to moving any Soldier with fewer than 24 months at their current duty station. To accomplish this, the Army Human Resources Command (HRC) works with the inactivating BCTs and their higher headquarters to first fill critical needs on the same installation and then if necessary, critical needs and shortages off of the installation.

If a permanent change of station (PCS) is needed, unit commanders will ensure their enlisted Soldiers update their Assignment Satisfaction Key in order to account for each Soldier's preferences for their next assignment. Finally, HRC is making every effort to synchronize the timing of PCS moves to coincide with natural breaks in school years or semesters, with most moves occurring in the summer.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 12: I have heard talk that the Pentagon is exploring modifications to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), including a possible across-the-board reduction in the BAH rate as a way to find continued savings within the Department. Would cutbacks to BAH increase the out-of-pocket housing expenses for the service members and their families or jeopardize the stability of the privatized military housing program?

Answer: Yes, DOD is proposing slowing the growth of BAH to six percent out-of-pocket costs for service members and their families over several years. The BAH growth slowdown could adversely affect the financials of each housing privatization project as the net operating income, which is based on the BAH as rent, decreases. Services, amenities, future housing upgrades or replacements, maintenance and repair, and overall housing quality could be affected, having a direct impact on the quality of life for our Airmen and families.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Question 13: I have heard talk that the Pentagon is exploring modifications to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), including a possible across-the-board reduction in the BAH rate as a way to find continued savings within the Department. Would cutbacks to BAH increase the out-of-pocket housing expenses for the service members and their families or jeopardize the stability of the privatized military housing program?

Answer: Yes, if implemented, the 5% reduction currently being considered will increase a Soldier's out-of-pocket housing expense. By law, rate protection will apply to all Soldiers. That is, a Soldier will not see a decrease in their housing allowance as long as they remain at their present duty station. When they are reassigned the reduced rate would affect their BAH at the new duty station. Moreover, to lessen the impact to newly assigned Soldiers, the reduction will be phased in equally over a three-year period leading to full implementation.

When the Army executed Residential Community Initiatives (RCI) we entered into long term legal agreements that stipulate that the renting Soldier would pay the BAH to the RCI partners. If these agreements remain as they are, recapitalization rates for RCI housing could be negatively impacted.

In an effort to avert destabilizing the privatized housing program, the Army has already started the process of amending Project legal documents to permit all RCI Projects to charge Service Members rent in excess of their BAH. If BAH rates are reduced or remain flat in the future, this amendment will provide Projects the ability to charge rents sufficient to ensure their financial and operational viability.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Question 14: I have heard talk that the Pentagon is exploring modifications to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), including a possible across-the-board reduction in the BAH rate as a way to find continued savings within the Department. Would cutbacks to BAH increase the out-of-pocket housing expenses for the service members and their families or jeopardize the stability of the privatized military housing program?

Answer: Personnel costs for military and civilian personnel make up about half of DOD's base budget - a share that continues to grow and force tradeoffs with other priorities. It is a strategic imperative to rein in this cost growth; one proposal is to temporarily slow Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) growth.

We absolutely understand that benefits and compensation components such as basic pay, BAH, health care, and tuition benefits are important to our Sailors and their families, and we are assessing the impact of proposed BAH changes. The Navy is committed to ensuring our Sailors and their families have safe, suitable and affordable housing and that privatized housing is sustained and recapitalized over the long-term.

We plan to continue engaging with Public Private Venture Housing partners to see what the potential impacts will be.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Question 15: I have heard talk that the Pentagon is exploring modifications to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), including a possible across-the-board reduction in the BAH rate as a way to find continued savings within the Department. Would cutbacks to BAH increase the out-of-pocket housing expenses for the service members and their families or jeopardize the stability of the privatized military housing program?

Answer: The proposal submitted in President's FY15 budget requests a slowing of growth in BAH to 94% of average measured housing costs (5% for out of pocket costs and 1% for the elimination of renter's insurance reimbursement). It is expected that this will take several years to achieve the targeted 6% out-of-pocket cost. Marines will continue to have rate protection so that the financial impact of out-of-pocket expenses would not occur until their next Permanent Change of Station (PCS.) Whether Marines have increased out-of-pocket expenses would be dependent on the cost of housing that they choose. Potential loss of income to Public-Private Venture (PPV) partners could result in a reduction of offered amenities, as well as deferred improvements and maintenance. The military services have the authority under the Military Housing Privatization Initiative to make the project adjustments in terms of work and revenue that are required to sustain the housing in good condition.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for
Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Army Drawdown

Question 16: Will the Army's drawdown result in soldiers who have good records, and who are fully qualified for continued service, will have to leave active duty because of the drawdown numbers game?

Answer: Yes, because the Army cannot achieve fiscally driven reductions in strength through natural losses and normal attrition, some fully qualified Soldiers will have to leave active duty. As the Army continues implementing its drawdown strategy in an effort to balance the force and sustain force capability and readiness, we are sensitive to ensuring that we treat our All Volunteer Force with dignity and respect recognizing the service and sacrifices Soldiers and their Families have made to our Army and the Nation.

Our priority remains retaining Soldiers with the greatest potential for future contributions while encouraging quality Soldiers transitioning from the Active Component to continue their service in the Reserve Components. Reduction programs focus quantitatively on Soldier populations where projected inventories, by skill and grade, exceed future requirements, and qualitatively by assessing each Soldier's potential. Not only will this allow the Army to identify and retain our most talented Soldiers, but also ensure that the proper grade and skill mix is aligned with force structure requirements.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for
Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Army Drawdown

Question 17: It is my understanding that the Army this past January it launched a new leader development strategy that tightens the linkage between completion of Non Commissioned Officers (NCO) education courses and promotions, can you take a few moments and explain what this will mean to NCOs?

Answer: Effective January 2014, the Army linked completion of formal training to promotion eligibility across all Army components. The policies support a synchronous relationship between the NCO Education System and promotions that is deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive. This means NCOs must complete mandatory training requirements to qualify for increased responsibility, better preparing them to confront the complexities of today's operational environment.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Army Drawdown

Question 18: Can you explain the other type of drawdown management programs and policies the Army is using to shape the Force? Do you think the current drawdown will have a major effect on moral?

Answer: As reductions in end strength cannot be achieved through natural losses and normal attrition alone, certain involuntary separation programs are required. However, the Army's priority remains retaining Soldiers with the greatest potential for continued service while encouraging quality Soldiers transitioning from the Active Component to continue to serve in the Reserve Components.

Reduction programs will focus quantitatively where projected inventories, by skill and grade, exceed future requirements, and qualitatively by assessing the potential of these Soldiers. Officer Separation Boards, Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Boards, reduced Selective Continuation, Selective Retention Boards, Qualitative Service Program boards, and precision retention will allow the Army to meet end strength goals while providing transition support to those who will leave the service.

As the Army continues implementing its drawdown strategy to balance the force and sustain force capability and readiness, we remain sensitive to the morale of the force. Our Soldiers have performed superbly for more than a decade of persistent conflict. To ensure we honor the tremendous sacrifices of our Soldiers and their Families, the Army's implementation of its drawdown strategy must be deliberate, purposeful, precise, and transparent in its processes and clear in its communications, including thoughtful transition programs aimed at ensuring future success.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for
Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 19: Please describe the policies and programs currently in place to combat sexual assault and provide immediate care and assistance to victims of sexual assault? What new programs are being implemented to combat this issue?

Answer: We've made substantial progress in addressing sexual assault in the Army in the past year. Through the combined efforts of our military and civilian leaders at all echelons, we've implemented an unprecedented number of program and policy initiatives — more than 30 in the past year — to address this criminal behavior. I believe the initiatives put forth will enhance reporting, investigation and prosecution of sexual assault offenses. Further, these initiatives will increase the accountability of leaders—officers, enlisted and civilian—at all levels, enhancing the overall quality and capability of victim response. Ultimately, these initiatives will foster a cultural change that will lead to a more positive command climate. .

The Army's intent is to ensure only the best people serve in the important positions of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates (VAs). To ensure greater accountability in the appointment of SARCs and VAs, the Secretary of the Army reserved the authority to appoint SARCs to the first General Officer (G0)/Senior Executive Service (SES) in the SARC's chain of command. He also reserved the authority to appoint VAs to the brigade commander, or equivalent-level commander or civilian supervisor (serving in a grade no lower than Colonel or GS-15), with cognizance over the position. The Secretary also mandated more in-depth screening requirements, and strengthened selection criteria for SARCs and VAs. The strict requirements for SARC/VA selection and screening, combined with comprehensive training and the support of special investigators, special prosecutors and special victim counsel, demonstrate the Army's commitment to sexual assault victims through a multidisciplinary team approach to victim advocacy.

The Army piloted a centralized SHARP Schoolhouse in FY14, with the intent of standing up a permanent schoolhouse at the end of FY14 or beginning of FY15. The SHARP Schoolhouse incorporates instruction from Criminal Investigation Division (CID), Office of The Judge Advocate General (OTJAG), Office of the Surgeon General (OTSG), and others, to better prepare full-time SARCs and VAs for the scenarios they typically encounter. The comprehensive 8-week training at the SHARP Schoolhouse will help the Army's efforts to professionalize the SHARP Program with high quality personnel who can establish and maintain the confidence and trust of the Soldiers they support. The Army will continue to credential SARCs/VAs via the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) through the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP).

The Army's Special Victim Counsel Program is designed to improve victim support in sexual assault cases by providing specially trained active duty Army Judge Advocates to represent sexual assault victims. Additionally, Army Judge Advocates now serve as Article 32 investigating officers in cases where the accused is charged with a qualifying sexual assault offense. Staff Judge Advocates will consider rank, experience and training when selecting a Judge Advocate to serve as an Article 32 investigating officer. The Special Victim Prosecutor (SVP), Special Victim Counselor (SVC) and other Judge Advocate training efforts will continue. TJAGLCS has already posted SVC training on-line to provide initial training and refresher opportunities.

During FY14, the Army will formalize each Medical Treatment Facility's (MTF's) sexual assault medical management office by appointing a medical director, responsive to the Deputy Commander for Clinical Services. The intent is to have all sexual assault medical providers meet the same enhanced and expanded background checks as SARCs and VAs.

In addition to providing victims the best possible medical care as needed, Army policy affords victims the option of requesting an expedited transfer or reassignment from their unit. Unit commanders must provide a response to the victim's request for expedited transfer within 72 hours, and only a General Officer in the chain of command can disapprove that request. Requests for Permanent Change of Station expedited transfers can only be disapproved by the Commanding General, Human Resources Command. Additionally, the commander has the option to transfer the accused.

In June 2013, the Army transitioned its annual SHARP Summit to a semi-annual Senior Leader Summit on SHARP. Attendees included Commanding Generals and their Command Sergeants Majors. The Chief of Staff of the Army hosted the two-day event which included a series of panel discussions on sexual assault victim response, care and treatment, as well as the sharing of Army-wide lessons learned and best practices. The first FY14 Summit was held in January 2014.

In addition to entrance screening of SARCs and VA's, the Secretary of the Army has directed further background screening and additional personnel. These personnel include drill sergeants, recruiters, and platoon sergeants at Advanced Individual Training. These additional screening efforts will ensure that these persons who oversee our young Soldiers during a particular vulnerable period of time are appropriately suited for these positions of trust.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 20: Please describe the policies and programs currently in place to combat sexual assault and provide immediate care and assistance to victims of sexual assault? What new programs are being implemented to combat this issue?

Answer: Understanding the realities of sexual assault and the conditions under which it occurs is a primary, continuous activity. Prevention initiatives continue using a multi-faceted approach focusing on command climate; deterrence; and bystander intervention. Navy commanders are charged with fostering an environment in which behaviors and actions that may lead to sexual assault, as well as sexual assault itself, are not tolerated, condoned or ignored. To improve command climate, we have taken the following actions:

- The 21st Century Sailor Office was established on the Chief of Naval Operations staff and its director named as Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Officer to direct implementation of Navy-wide SAPR efforts.
- Prospective Commanding Officer/Senior Enlisted Academy SAPR course curriculum reflects the most current training requirements.
- A comprehensive, audience-focused SAPR training curriculum exists at every Navy entry point (Recruit Training Command, U.S. Naval Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Candidate School).
- Sixteen SAPR billets, in the grade of O-4 or above, were recently established at our most senior commands to improve program oversight, and another nine billets will be filled in fiscal year 2014.
- Command climate surveys are conducted within 90 days of assuming command, and annually thereafter; results are reviewed by each unit's Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) and briefed to members of the unit.
- The Department of the Navy developed and presented mandatory SAPR training for all civilian employees entitled "Sexual Assault Prevention: One Team, One Fight." Training addresses bystander intervention, reporting options and resources for civilian employees, and the impact of sexual assault on victims, commands and mission accomplishment. This complemented, for civilians, SAPR — Fleet and SAPR — Leadership training that was delivered to the active duty and Reserve force.

To deter sexual assault, we have identified and implemented regional best practices throughout the Navy to include:

- An alcohol de-glamorization campaign was intensified, and Alcohol Detection Devices are used to discourage alcohol abuse.

- Roving barracks patrols increase the visible presence of leadership in order to deter behavior that may lead to sexual assault or other misconduct.
- In our barracks, indoctrination training requirements have been modified to improve safety of barracks for residents and Resident Advisor (E-6 and above) training is mandatory.
- Facilities are surveyed to identify areas that require better lighting, visibility, or other safety improvements to reduce the vulnerability of Sailors.

Bystander Intervention is another key element of our prevention efforts. Specifically,

- All Training Support Center/"A" schools deliver Bystander Intervention training to post-recruit training Sailors.
- SAPR-Fleet Training is completed during recruit training.
- The Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions provides peer-to-peer mentoring and SAPR strategic messaging.
- Fleet Workshops and Personnel Readiness Summits are delivered to fleet concentration areas; programs incorporate Bystander Intervention training and innovative sexual assault training (e.g., *Sex Signals, No Zebras*).

To provide immediate, continued care and support to victims, Navy has several programs and initiatives. For victim advocacy Navy has the following programs.

Sexual Assault Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) serve as single points-of-contact to coordinate sexual assault response when a sexual assault is reported. Victim Advocates facilitate care and provide referrals and non-clinical support and advocacy to victims. Navy has 66 civilian and five active duty SARCs, 67 civilian VAs, and over 4,400 SAPR Unit VAs (uniformed, collateral duty).

A recently-established Deployed Resiliency Counselor (DRC) program assigns credentialed clinical counselors to aircraft carriers and large-deck amphibious assault ships to provide short-term individual therapy and psycho-educational training on Sailor resiliency topics — such as, suicide prevention, substance abuse and the prevention of sexual assault — when the ship to which they are assigned is deployed, and to hold shipboard office hours in homeport.

Navy has implemented a Victims Legal Counsel (VLC) program and has dedicated 30 Judge Advocates (29 VLC and one Chief of Staff) with military justice experience to provide legal support for eligible victims of sexual assault. The primary mission of the VLC Program is to provide legal counsel and, as appropriate, advocacy, for victims. Navy VLC help protect victims' rights through the investigative and adjudicative stages of the military justice system. VLC also complement the care and support victims receive from SARCs and VAs. VLC duties include explaining the investigative and military justice processes; advocating the victim's rights and interests; and, when appropriate, appearing in court on the victim's behalf

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 21: Please describe the policies and programs currently in place to combat sexual assault and provide immediate care and assistance to victims of sexual assault? What new programs are being implemented to combat this issue?

Answer: Since the establishment of its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program in 2005, the Marine Corps has implemented a series of multidisciplinary initiatives that comprise a comprehensive and holistic approach to combating the crime of sexual assault and providing support to victims. With the launch of our SAPR Campaign in June 2012, the number of policies and programs supporting these efforts has expanded exponentially. We have implemented a broad range of initiatives with the end goal—through awareness and acknowledgement of the crime—of empowering Marines to play an active role in reducing the risk of sexual assault. Our SAPR initiatives are also designed to ensure that victims are receiving immediate care and assistance, including encouraging Marines to seek help and support their fellow Marines. The following table is an overview of some of our key SAPR initiatives, which have been operationalized along five lines of effort:

Line of Effort	Program/Policy	Description
Prevention	Training Programs	Every Marine undergoes SAPR training—including bystander intervention—at critical junctures throughout his/her career, including upon recruitment, in Military Occupational Specialty schools, and upon promotion or assumption of command.
Investigation	NCIS Adult Sexual Assault Program (ASAP)	Via ASAP, local and regional teams were developed that comprise specially trained investigators who focus on and expedite investigations of adult sexual assault cases using surge capabilities.
	NCIS Upstaffing	By direction of the Secretary of the Navy, NCIS created 54 Full-Time Equivalent positions to be filled during FY14. These include: ASAP special agents, crime scene personnel, and other support personnel.
Accountability	Legal Reorganization	The USMC overhauled its legal community into a regional model, enhancing our special victims capability and allowing expert lawyers to prosecute sexual assault cases, regardless of location.
	Victims' Legal Counsel Organization	The VLCO confidentially assists each victim through the investigation and prosecution process, ensuring that victims understand and feel informed about the military justice system.
Assessment	Command Climate Surveys	The internal USMC and external DEOMI surveys cover a spectrum of issues, including sexual assault and the impact of SAPR initiatives on the attitudes and perceptions of Marines.
	Victim Advocacy Survey	This anonymous survey is distributed to all victims who utilized SAPR services, allowing us to assess victim experiences and refine our care capabilities.
Advocacy/ Victim Care	SAPR 8-Day Briefs	A USMC and DoD best practice, 8-Day Briefs facilitate leadership engagement at the onset of each unrestricted report and ensure the victim has ready access to the full range of services.
	Sexual Assault Response Teams	Implemented at each USMC installation, these specialized teams of medical, legal, and investigative professionals help victims navigate the support and legal options available to them.
	SAPR Personnel Certification	All SAPR personnel must now be credentialed by the National Organization for Victim Assistance, which includes the completion of a 40-hour victim advocacy training program.
	Upstaffing of SAPR Personnel	In FY13, 27 full-time SARCs and 22 full-time SAPR VAs were added. The Marine Corps plans to fill 21 additional full-time SAPR billets in FY14.

Our planned and future programs will be designed to support our current efforts, as well as to implement newly emerging evidence-based strategies to further advance our goal of preventing sexual assault and assisting victims of this crime.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 22: Please describe the policies and programs currently in place to combat sexual assault and provide immediate care and assistance to victims of sexual assault? What new programs are being implemented to combat this issue?

Answer: The Air Force has instituted several measures to ensure leadership is fully engaged in preventing sexual assaults, including policies which assure wing commanders are immediately notified of any alleged sexual assault. Additionally, Air Force squadron commanders must meet with a judge advocate on all cases of alleged sexual assault. Furthermore, all commanders' training has an added focus on empathy and understanding, a critical piece to empowering victims. This is in addition to the processes, procedures and available resources to help Airmen heal.

Several institutional safeguards are in place to effectively dissuade, deter and detect unprofessional conduct and hold those accountable who have violated standards. Measures to protect and educate all our incoming Airmen include briefings in Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS), Basic Military Training, Officer Training School, and Reserve Officer Training Corps on sexual assault/harassment, unprofessional relationships, and maltreatment. These briefings explain how to report sexual assault, advertise the availability of the 24/7 Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) Hotlines, and identify our robust SARC support to both civilian and military Airmen. We are dedicated to identifying mistreatment early and teaching our force it is unacceptable, against our core values and will not be tolerated.

The Air Force has established a central repository for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training material, vetted through the Air Force SAPR training office and subject matter experts. For the delivery of SAPR-related content, SAPR experts/trained instructors lead the sessions to ensure SAPR messages are consistently presented and our core competencies and learning objectives are unvaryingly met. Central to all training curricula is the idea of promoting a climate of dignity, respect and responsibility.

Sexual assault is a multi-faceted issue that requires specific data to measure, monitor and evaluate trends. Our Air Force-wide effort focuses on developing a standardized assessment tool to provide insight into our risk and protective factors, as well as indicate, with measurable confidence, our program successes. With this data we are anticipating we can better understand the prevailing norms surrounding violence within the Air Force.

In addition to a certified SARC, specialized Sexual Assault Victim Advocates (SAVAs) are on call at every installation. Additionally, the Air Force has over 2,000 trained and credentialed volunteer victim advocates willing to answer calls 24/7. Specially trained Special Victims' Counsel, Office of Special Investigation forensic specialists, and Special Victims Unit Trial Counsel are available to represent victims throughout the investigation and prosecution processes, increasing both victim empowerment and willingness to cooperate with the military justice system.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 23: Incidents of assault appear to be highest among the 18-24 year old, junior enlisted population. Starting with the Army, what are we doing to teach our newest servicemembers about the military's no tolerance policy for sexual assault and the programs in place should they experience such an assault?

Answer: Our Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Program (SHARP) training is a key element in our multi-faceted prevention approach. Training is integrated throughout the life-cycle of a Soldier's career. Since 2011, SHARP Training has been integrated into Army Initial Military Training (IMT). This training includes signs of abuse of power, sexual harassment/assault, unprofessional relationships and how and where to report sexual harassment/assault. The Army requires all IMT trainees receive SHARP training within 14 days of entrance; this policy has been in place since 2012.

Additionally, the following steps have been taken to indoctrinate our new recruits regarding zero tolerance for sexual assault and improve training for our new service members:

- Implementation of Sex Signals Training. The Army continues to use Sex Signals as part of the IMT SHARP indoctrination. Sex Signals is a 90-minute, live, two-person (male and female), audience interactive program that includes skits dealing with dating, consent, rape and other associated topics such as body language, gender relations, alcohol use and intervention. As part of IMT, the Army conducts 650 Sex Signals presentations a year at Basic Combat Training, at the Basic Officer Leader Course-A (ROTC), BOLC-B (Officer Basic Course), at the United States Military Academy and throughout the Operational Force.

- Selection and Oversight of Recruiters. The Army reviewed its selection process for all leaders in positions of trust, to include recruiters. The Army's Personnel Suitability Screening Policy requires that Soldiers in positions of trust and responsibility, such as recruiters, drill sergeants and Advance Individual Training platoon sergeants, are subjected to enhanced screening. This enhanced screening includes a review of Restricted Personnel files, Inspector General (IG) files, Family Advocacy files, and background investigation data. Mandatory additional screening for IMT personnel and recruiters includes a review of the Department of Justice Sex Offender Registry, Army Substance Abuse Program records, and a local police check.

- SHARP Training for Recruiters. A comprehensive review of SHARP training determined the Army requires specialized instruction for its recruiters. In FY13, the Army implemented a revised Training Support Package (TSP) for recruiter training at United States

Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). This TSP includes extensive instruction on roles and responsibilities of recruiters in addressing sexual assault; instruction on techniques for establishing a climate that prevents harassment and assault, as well as responding to and protecting the rights and privacy of victims; and instruction on detecting indicators that may signal abuse of power, sexual assault, or unprofessional relationships. In addition, recruiters conduct periodic small group, vignette-based training throughout their life-cycle in USAREC.

- The Army developed a distributed-learning program that USAREC will implement in 2014 for future Soldiers. This web-based training is designed to be a comprehensive sexual assault awareness and prevention program that future Soldiers conduct before reporting for enlistment. Topics for the training include: the definition of sexual assault; the nature of consent; the effects/risks of alcohol use; how to recognize sexual aggression; how to reduce risk; the differences between consensual sex and rape; how to intervene in potentially dangerous situations; what to do if a sexual assault occurs; and how Army Values relate to the issue of sexual assault.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 24: Incidents of assault appear to be highest among the 18-24 year old, junior enlisted population. Starting with the Army, what are we doing to teach our newest servicemembers about the military's no tolerance policy for sexual assault and the programs in place should they experience such an assault?

Answer: During transit to Recruit Training Command (RTC), recruits receive sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR) training through a video presentation of the commanding officer articulating six zero tolerance policies: sexual assault and harassment, racism, hazing, fraternization, substance abuse, and recruit-to-recruit contact. During the second week of training, formal RTC instructor-led Sexual Awareness training includes:

- definition of sexual assault,
- unrestricted and restricted reporting options,
- role of the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) and Victim Advocate (VA),
- contact information for all SAPR personnel, and
- leadership's explicit guidance regarding proper behavior.

Recruits are made aware of victim support and care resources and are provided information on how to contact a SARC, VA, chaplain, medical personnel, or the DoD Safe Helpline (which provides 24/7 phone, text or chat with a qualified advocate). They receive SAPR-Fleet training, which focuses on Sailor responsibility for positive changes in their command and within Navy, with an emphasis on bystander intervention and responsible decision-making. Beginning this fiscal year, SAPR-Fleet training is delivered in the Sailor's first fleet tour as part of the command indoctrination program.

Following graduation from RTC, Sailors attend bystander intervention (BI) training, either at a Training Support Command (TSC) or initial skills training "A" school, which teaches them to:

- recognize the underlying issues and unique dynamics of sexual violence;
 - develop concrete options for intervention;
 - stand up to be proactive leaders in events that lead to sexual assault; and
 - think critically and personally empathize with the gravity of these events.
- Bystander intervention training provides young Sailors with tangible skills and tools they will carry to the fleet.

While at TSC, on an ad hoc basis, Sailors also receive training/presentations such as "*No Zebras*" and "*Sex Signals*," which offer improvisation and audience interaction to explore how social pressures, gender stereotypes, and false preconceptions contribute to tensions found in dating, and how these and other factors can lead to sexual assault.

All Sailors continue to receive annual SAPR General Military Training. SAPR training is also incorporated into curriculum for Petty Officer Indoctrination and E5/E6 Leadership courses.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for
Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 25: Incidents of assault appear to be highest among the 18-24 year old, junior enlisted population. Starting with the Army, what are we doing to teach our newest service members about the military's no tolerance policy for sexual assault and the programs in place should they experience such an assault?

Answer: The Marine Corps has recently completed the development of "Step Up," a new bystander intervention program designed specifically for junior enlisted Marines (E-1 to E-3), our highest-risk demographic. Based on the success of our "Take A Stand" training course for noncommissioned officers, the new 90-minute program teaches the principles of bystander intervention, an evidence-based best practice in sexual assault prevention, and asserts that prevention is impossible without all Marines fully understanding their inherent duty to protect each other from this crime. In addition, Marines at all levels are mandated to complete annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training to ensure a thorough understanding of all available resources and policies pertaining to sexual assault. These SAPR training requirements are customized in a manner specific to grade. Accordingly, for young Marines in the Delayed Entry Program, Recruit Depots, Officer Candidates School, and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) schools, SAPR training takes a values-based, "whole of character" approach aimed at instilling the Marine Corps' high tradition of integrity and professionalism, teaching ethical behavior as a necessary component of the success of our institution.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 26: Incidents of assault appear to be highest among the 18-24 year old junior enlisted population. Starting with the Army, what are we doing to teach our newest service members about the military's no tolerance policy for sexual assault and the programs in place should they experience such an assault?

Answer: The following courses are provided to junior enlisted personnel in the period shortly after entry on active duty.

Accessions I — Basic Military Training (BMT). Implemented 11.5 hours of the following core training on sexual diversity, sexual harassment and sexual assault for new Air Force recruits:

Human Relations I (2.5 hours):

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Professional and Unprofessional Relationships
- Fraternalization
- Building Relationships
- Conflict Resolution
- Religious Diversity
- Sensitivity with Other Cultures

Human Relations II (5 hours)

- Barriers to Respectful Human Relations
- Stereotyping, Prejudice, Disparaging Terms, Discrimination, Hazing, and Sexual Harassment
- Positive Human Relations Skills
- Forbidden Relationships/Unprofessional Relationships
- Sexual Predator Risk Indicators

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (4 hours)

- Definition of Sexual Assault
- Definition of Consent
- Prevention
- Air Force Zero Tolerance Policy
- Four Common Sexual Assault Roles — Perpetrator, Facilitator, Passive Bystander and Victim

- Culture of Responsible Choices Program
- Victim Response Process (victim sensitivity/reporting procedures)

Accessions II - Technical Training. Instills the Air Force core value behaviors in the following areas: 1) The impact of a sexual assault; 2) How to respond to a sexual assault; and 3) How to stop (prevent) an assault. Training includes the following topics:

- Reinforcement of Fundamentals Associated with Sexual Assault
- Impact of Sexual Assault on Individuals/Units/Air Force Overall
- Breakdown of Trust and Unit Cohesion
- How to Constructively Respond to Assault Situations
- Displaying Empathy to the Victim and Support
- Avoiding Gossip
- How to Prevent Sexual Assault and Reduce Risk
- Wingman Guiding Principles
- Avoid Passive By-Standing
- Effective Communication in Relationships
- Three-Step Process — Asking for Permission, Clearly Communicating Boundaries, Listening and Respecting Boundaries
- Emphasis on a Person's Ability to Consent
- Sexual Assault is Never the Victim's Fault
- Air Force Policy of Zero Tolerance

First Term Airman Center (FTAC) — FTAC reemphasizes concepts taught at BMT and Technical Training require at least one hour of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Awareness (SAPR) as a mandatory topic to be briefed as part of the FTAC experience.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 27: Is there any concern that the expanded role our female servicemembers will soon be taking on could lead to an increase in sexual assaults?

Answer: Sexual assault is not a female issue or a male issue—it's a leadership issue. It is a leadership responsibility to ensure a culture and positive command climate of safety, trust and respect for every Soldier—regardless of gender—so every Soldier can thrive and reach his or her Mt potential. I believe several of the initiatives that have been implemented recently are viable tools for our leaders to use in ensuring we have the proper command climate in all units, including brigade combat teams. The initiatives include more stringent screening requirements for anyone serving in positions of trust and the elevation of appointing authorities for Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates, which increases accountability and oversight by ensuring the very best are selected to serve in these critical positions. The Army requires units that are part of the expansion of opportunities to women to review all Equal Opportunity and SHARP training requirements. This emphasis appears to set the stage appropriately for men and women to be successful. Our monitoring through surveys and climate command assessments in these previously all-male units indicates no increase in the incidence of sexual harassment or assault.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 28: Is there any concern that the expanded role our female servicemembers will soon be taking on could lead to an increase in sexual assaults?

Answer: No. There is no correlation between the role of female service members and the incidence of sexual assault. Sexual assault is a gender neutral crime — it happens to males as well as to females. There is nothing to indicate that expanding opportunities for women will result in an increase in sexual assaults. Navy leadership has made sexual assault prevention and response a top priority. We are fully engaged in identifying ways to prevent sexual assault, to ensure victims of sexual assault, regardless of gender, feel sufficiently comfortable to report this crime if it does occur, and receive support and counseling. We also investigate every report and hold offenders appropriately accountable. Key to this transition are commanders, who are charged with enforcing standards of conduct within their commands and maintaining an appropriate command climate in which all Sailors are safe. We continue to monitor and take appropriate action to reduce the incidence of sexual assault within our Navy and will remain vigilant as we expand opportunities for women to serve.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 29: Is there any concern that the expanded role our female service members will soon be taking on could lead to an increase in sexual assaults?

Answer: Leaders are held responsible for establishing a climate and setting the conditions in which all their Marines, both male and female, can succeed and serve in their units with dignity. This includes units that were once closed to females.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 29: Is there any concern that the expanded role our female service members will soon be taking on could lead to an increase in sexual assaults?

Answer: In short, no. Female Airmen have been involved in combat for many years. Their new roles give them more opportunities to have accomplishments and recognition on more even footing with their male counterparts. This greater status may, in fact, decrease predation by those trying to exploit power gradients. Furthermore, full-time Sexual Assault Response Coordinators have been in every deployed location since 2005 for training and victim support, and full time victim advocates have been required since October 1, 2013.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 31: What programs are in place for both our recruits and at our service academies to raise awareness of this issue? What programs are in place to train our commanders and senior non-commissioned officers how to handle such cases?

Answer: The Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Program (SHARP) training is a key element in our multi-faceted prevention approach. Training is integrated throughout the life-cycle of a Soldiers' career. Since 2011, SHARP Training has been integrated into Army Initial Military Training (IMT). This training includes signs of abuse of power, sexual harassment/assault, and unprofessional relationships. The training also incorporates sex signals, a 90-minute, live, two-person (male and female), audience interactive program that includes skits dealing with dating, consent, rape and other associated topics such as body language, gender relations, alcohol use and intervention. As part of IMT, the Army conducts 650 Sex Signals presentations a year at Basic Combat Training, at the Basic Officer Leader Course -A (ROTC), BOLC-B (Officer Basic Course), at the United States Military Academy and throughout the Operational Force. The Army requires all IMT trainees receive SHARP training within 14 days of entering IMT; this policy has been in place since 2012.

The Army has recognized the importance of fostering an environment free of sexual assault and harassment at the United States Military Academy (USMA). The West Point leadership has made this a top priority at the academy. The senior commander of West Point chairs a monthly Sexual Assault Review Board to ensure there is unity in effort throughout the military academy in combating sexual assault and harassment. SHARP education is incorporated at every level of cadet progression. The Corps of Cadets have dedicated Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) to educate cadets and cadre and care for victims of these offenses. The USMA also offers special victims' counsel to represent victims and has a trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner to provide specialized medical care to victims. Furthermore, the Corps of Cadets are taking a proactive role in changing the culture and eliminating sexual assault and harassment. They have established the Cadets Against Sexual Harassment and Assault (CASH/A). This organization consists of trained facilitators who have become the subject matter experts in the Army's SHARP Program. The program has grown to include a CASH/A representative within every cadet company. The United States Military Academy will continue to combat sexual assault and harassment by attacking the problem from every level.

As for our Commanders and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers, the Army expanded SHARP training throughout all levels of Operational and Institutional Training. Additionally, the Army provides SHARP training during pre-command courses, such as the Commander/First

Sergeant Course and during the Sergeants Major Academy to provide commanders and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) with the skill sets required for them to lead from the front on the issue of sexual assault. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command has added sequentially progressive SHARP training at the Army's Professional Military Education schools for Soldiers, NCOs and Officers.

The Army has sustained and expanded legal education for commanders, and added education for their senior enlisted advisors. Commanders who serve as courts-martial convening authorities attend mandatory legal education at the Senior Office Legal Orientation (SOLO) (for Special Courts-Martial Convening Authorities SPCMCA) and the General Officer Legal Orientation (GOLO) (for General Courts-Martial Convening Authorities -- GCMCA). Additionally, The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School (TJAGLCS) recently published the 2013 version of the Commander's Legal Handbook.

The SOLO is a 4.5 day course that covers the full breadth of a commander's legal responsibilities. Classes are generally 60-70 students with seminars and electives built into the curriculum. A significant portion of the course focuses on command responsibilities related to sexual assault. While most commanders who attend are brigade-level commanders, a significant number of battalion commanders attend on a space-available basis. There are efforts to expand legal education for all battalion commanders and to enhance commander education at the company command level through standardized training support packages implemented at the local level.

The GOLO is a one-day course that is required for all general officers who will serve as a GCMCA, but is also mandated by the Chief of Staff for all General Officers who are deploying. This course is conducted in a "one-on-one" setting and consists of mandatory topics including Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Response and Prevention, as well as elective topics that help focus the commander and specific topics relevant to their command.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 32: What programs are in place for both our recruits and at our service academies to raise awareness of this issue? What programs are in place to train our commanders and senior non-commissioned officers how to handle such cases?

Answer: At Recruit Training Command (RTC), Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training is embedded in basic "Sailorization" for all enlisted accessions. Embracing Navy Core Values and the concept of "what a Shipmate is and does" is at the forefront of each staff member's mind as they transform civilians into basic Sailors.

Navy recruits receive Sexual Assault Prevention and Response training by experts in multiple formats upon arrival at RTC and throughout accession training. Recruits receive training on the commanding officer's policies on sexual assault and harassment, racism, hazing, fraternization, substance abuse, and recruit-to-recruit contact upon arrival and again when completing in-processing. A formal instructor-led topic is presented five to eight days after arrival. During the first week, recruits are provided over one hour of male/female wellness training by Naval Health Clinic, Great Lakes senior clinical personnel and training on Navy Core Values by the chaplain.

Prior to graduation, recruits receive an hour-long brief by the ship's officer, a fleet lieutenant commander (0-4). The brief covers the "buddy system" requirement and reinforces the no alcohol policy/no hotel room for liberty weekends. An emphasis is placed on the importance of shipmates looking after each other and avoiding situations placing them at risk.

Officer Training Command Newport developed a plan that keeps SAPR in the forefront of the minds of both new officer accessions and staff. The plan includes an in-brief from the chaplain during initial SAPR training, follow-on Navy SAPR policy training, including the definition of sexual assault, restricted/unrestricted reports, the role of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA), and procedures if a sexual assault occurs.

During Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps Freshman Orientation, all incoming freshmen receive SAPR-Fleet training as part of the training program. Within two weeks of the semester start date, each unit completes SAPR stand-down requirements. All sophomores, juniors, and first and second year students participating in Seaman-to-Admiral 21 (STA-21) are required to complete SAPR-Fleet training within 60 days of the semester start date. Seniors and final year STA-21 candidates must complete the SAPR-Leadership training curriculum within 90 days of the semester start date.

Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy (USNA) participate in a comprehensive SAPR education and training program throughout their four years at USNA. They receive an initial four hours of SAPR training during plebe summer basic indoctrination. This training begins on Induction Day, when each incoming freshman meets the SAPR staff and receives basic information, including contact cards with response information. Over the next several weeks, they receive three additional sessions, including a SAPR Introduction brief (offered within 14 days of arrival at USNA), a one-hour Company Officer-led SAPR discussion, and a follow-up SAPR fundamentals session that includes relevant case study discussions.

During the academic calendar year, the USNA Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education (SHAPE) program focuses on broadening midshipman awareness of sexual harassment and assault, and emphasizes and fosters the midshipman's role as an active bystander. SHAPE approaches the subject-matter as both a cultural issue, deconstructing myths and accepted behaviors, and a leadership issue, providing practical tools to proactively intervene. SHAPE is a 30-hour tiered approach, explicitly aligned with the four-year USNA leadership curriculum, and utilizes a small-group, discussion-based format.

Starting in the current academic year at the USNA, sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention education topics were incorporated into the core curriculum of each year's leadership and ethics courses, totaling an additional 10 credit hours of education on these important topics. Three elective courses are offered each year to enhance education in related areas and include: Art and Science of Love and Intimacy; Sociology of Marriage and Families; and Gender Matters. These courses include gender socialization, violence and inequality; sexual identity and behavior; and intimate/sexual relationships and creating positive healthy relationships.

Commanders and senior non-commissioned officers receive targeted SAPR training developed for senior leadership in the grade of E-7 and above. This targeted leadership training provides command leadership triads (commanding officer/officer-in-charge, executive officer/assistant officer-in-charge and command master chief/chief of the boat/senior enlisted advisor) the skills to promote a culture of change through interactive video and facilitated face-to-face discussion. Training for senior personnel is also integrated into critical leadership training curricula including Senior Enlisted Advisor training and at Command Leadership School, as well as the Senior Officer Course. This comprehensive approach to training has allowed us to ensure continuous messaging and to tailor training to specific audiences.

Bystander Intervention is another key element of our prevention efforts. Specifically, all Training Support Center/"A" schools deliver Bystander Intervention training to post-recruit training Sailors; SAPR-Fleet Training is completed during recruit training; the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions provides peer-to-peer mentoring and SAPR strategic messaging; and, Fleet Workshops and Personnel Readiness Summits are delivered to fleet-concentration areas, incorporating Bystander Intervention training and innovative sexual assault training (e.g., *Sex Signals, No Zebras*).

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 33: What programs are in place for both our recruits and at our service academies to raise awareness of this issue? What programs are in place to train our commanders and senior non-commissioned officers how to handle such cases?

Answer: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training is conducted for all recruits by either the 1st Sergeant or Commander of the series within 14 duty days of initial entrance. SAPR recruit training communicates the nature of sexual assault in the military environment and includes the entire cycle of prevention, reporting, response, and accountability procedures. The program emphasizes all available reporting options, including the limitations of each option, and methods of prevention, such as bystander intervention. Toward the end of Recruit Training, the Senior Drill Instructor conducts a discussion with each recruit and specifically addresses SAPR.

In addition, the Marine Corps SAPR Commanders Course — mandatory for all prospective Commanders and Senior Enlisted Advisors — was updated to meet all core competencies and set learning objectives as defined by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and in accordance with the Secretary of Defense Memorandum signed September 25, 2012. The updated course also includes further training direction from the Commandant, and emphasizes the importance of command climate and the central role of leadership in both prevention and response. The four-phase course employs a read-ahead, a group lecture/discussion, and practical application (i.e., small-team problem-solving scenarios). The last phase is a brief by the Installation SARC within 30 days of assuming command or getting posted. In addition to teaching the basic concepts and issues related to sexual assault in the military, the training is designed to ensure that all Marine Corps leaders understand:

- Risks and circumstances associated with sexual assault incidence and the proactive measures to prevent sexual assault and associated destructive behaviors within their command;
- Essential elements of a quality victim care response program and the roles and responsibilities of victim service providers;
- Complexity of sexual assault crimes and the appropriate investigation and disposition options available; and
- The roles of Commanders and Senior Enlisted Leaders in fostering a command environment free of sexual assault.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Sexual Assault in the Force

Question 34: What programs are in place for both our recruits and at our service academies to raise awareness of this issue? What programs are in place to train our commanders and senior non-commissioned officers how to handle such cases?

Answer: Air Force recruits receive a 10-15 minute briefing during their first week of training which includes contact information for their installation sexual assault response coordinator (SARC). Trainees receive a more detailed 4-hour Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) training session entitled "Accessions I". This course covers definitions of terms, prevention, roles and information about response options delivered using video and real world scenarios. Trainees receive a second block of SAPR training, "Accessions II", during technical training. This block is three hours with one hour devoted solely to group interaction and role playing.

At the Air Force Academy, SAPR Training involves leadership's direct involvement on how to deal with and curb the sexual assault problem. Air Force Academy cadet SAPR training begins on the second day of training with 30 minutes devoted directly to understanding the availability of SAPR resources. The cadets also take the Air Force "Accessions I and II" during their junior years at the Academy. All first year cadets attend a mandatory presentation by the group *Sex Signals*. This group is nationally recognized for providing engaging training sessions that provide audiences with real world knowledge and experiences.

At the wing and group level the Air Force arms its newest leaders with SAPR program information delivered at the Commander's Course held at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. Each major command delivers its own Commander's Course, which includes SAPR information at the squadron level. Both courses cover definitions, trends, a Staff Judge Advocate discussion on legal issues, real world scenarios and role playing. All installation SARCs provide a SAPR briefing to all in-coming commanders within their first 30 days of command. The SARC briefs the commander on confidentiality requirements for restricted reports in addition to sexual assault trends for both the garrison units and in deployed areas. Commanders are required to contact the legal office to receive Military Rules of Evidence 514 training, dealing with privileged communications. Lastly, the Air Force SAPR program developed a popular Commander's Guide to Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. This guide is being adapted for a larger audience of leaders, both officer and enlisted. Senior Non-Commissioned Officers receive SAPR training in many venues beginning in Airmen Leadership School continuing thru Non-Commissioned Officer Academy and culminating in the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Transition Assistant Programs (TAP)

Question 35: During last year's hearing, you all were asked if the Services are seeing positive results of the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" or if it was too early to say? Most of you stated that you were in the implantation stages and weren't able to provide any quantitative observation results. Starting with the Army, are you noticing an increase and are there any quantitative results you can provide at this time?

Answer: The Army is seeing positive results and VOW compliance continues to steadily improve month over month and quarter over quarter. First quarter FY14 VOW compliance for the Total Force was 63% with the Active Duty at 79%, Army National Guard at 32%, and United States Army Reserve at 35%. Second quarter FY14 VOW compliance for the Total Force through February increased slightly. All components show an improvement over first quarter with the Active Duty at 82%, Army National Guard at 36%, and United States Army Reserve at 39%. Upon final publication a DoD policy, combined with upgraded information technology infrastructure, the Army will be much closer to meeting the mandatory requirements.

Reserve Component challenges include: attending briefings and completing deliverables; documenting attendance or completion of variables (to include exemptions); or identifying and notifying Reserve Component Soldiers who transition outside of demobilization sites. The Army continues to work with United States Army Reserve and Army National Guard leadership as well as the offices of Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor to refine processes and reporting procedures to increase VOW compliance within the Reserve Component.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Transition Assistant Programs (TAP)

Question 36: During last year's hearing, you all were asked if the Services are seeing positive results of the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" or if it was too early to say? Most of you stated that you were in the implantation stages and weren't able to provide any quantitative observation results. Starting with the Army, are you noticing an increase and are there any quantitative results you can provide at this time?

Answer: The new curriculum for Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success), and related tracks, are fully operational at all 47 Navy Fleet and Family Service Center transition sites. During fiscal year 2013, on average, approximately 2,900 Sailors attended the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) brief each month, while approximately 2,800 attended the Department of Labor (DoL) employment workshop. These same levels of participation have continued thus far in fiscal year 2014. On post-workshop assessments, approximately 90 percent of Sailors agreed, or strongly agreed, that this program was beneficial in helping them gain the information and skills needed to better plan for transition.

We are currently working with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Transition to Veterans Program Office (TVPO), and partner agencies, to establish and capture long-term performance measures on the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-56).

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Transition Assistant Programs (TAP)

Question 37: During last year's hearing, you all were asked if the Services are seeing positive results of the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" or if it was too early to say? Most of you stated that you were in the implantation stages and weren't able to provide any quantitative observation results. Starting with the Army, are you noticing an increase and are there any quantitative results you can provide at this time?

Answer: The Marine Corps has made significant improvement in the compliancy rate of the Active Component. This can be attributed to full system implementation at the beginning of the reporting year, improved practices by data entry personnel, increased oversight by Head Quarters Marine Corps (HQMC,) policy implementation, and improved communication with the field. As of January 2014, Marine Corps Active Component is 83.3% compliant with the VOW Act, and Marine Corps Reserve Component is 3.9% compliant with the VOW Act, for a Total Force compliance rate of 69.5%.

Based on data analysis, contributors to the low compliance rate for the Reserve Component include: (1) the clarity of the definition of Marines eligible for VOW compliance (i.e., "first 180 continuous days or more on active duty") and (2) the ability to schedule required training while Reservists are on Active Duty. The Marine Corps continues to work closely with the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) to ensure data accuracy and review data reports to confirm that the definition of "eligible" Reserve Component Marines is valid.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 38: During last year's hearing, you all were asked if the Services are seeing positive results of the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" or if it was too early to say? Most of you stated that you were in the implementation stages and weren't able to provide any quantitative observation results. Starting with the Army, are you noticing an increase and are there any quantitative results you can provide at this time?

Answer: The Air Force and our Airman & Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC) have put forth tremendous efforts as we deliver the re-designed Transition Assistance Program under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act and the Veterans Employment Initiative. Over the past 18 months, the Air Force has successfully implemented the redesigned five-day Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS) Workshop, initiated three two-day tracks (Accessing Higher Education, Career Technical Training, and Entrepreneurship), enhanced pre-separation counseling, and implemented Capstone. The Air Force has received positive feedback from transitioning Airmen and is working with OSD Transition to Veterans Program Office to obtain quantitative observation data. These quantitative observation results are not yet available; however we continue to solicit feedback from Air Force personnel who have utilized the updated program, which continues to be positive.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Transition Assistant Programs (TAP)

Question 39: Can you give us an update on the effectiveness of the Soldier for Life program in preparing Soldiers for transition to civilian life?

Answer: The Soldier For Life program office was established by Army Senior Leadership with a strategic direction to connect Army, governmental, and community efforts to build relationships that facilitate successful reintegration of our Soldiers, Retired Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families in order to keep them Army Strong and instill their values, ethos, and leadership within communities. Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier...a Soldier For Life.

The Army Career and Alumni Program is tasked to prepare the Soldier to be career/education ready for transition from military service. Many programs are available to assist spouses as well as Soldiers. In this manner, Soldiers leave active military service career ready and find an established network of enablers connecting them and their Family members with the employment, education, and healthcare required to successfully reintegrate into civilian society.

Soldier For Life is successful in its strategic mission because they are: changing the mindset of the Soldier and inculcating the Soldier For Life — Soldier Life Cycle mindset across the Army enterprise; improving access to employment, education and health; encouraging community relationships that embrace and support our transitioning population; and enabling greater trust between the Army and the American people, government and community efforts that will sustain the All-Volunteer Army. The Soldier For Life mindset is conveyed to each Soldier and his/her Family members through: embedding concepts into the Army culture; creating resiliency and a long term approach to transition; inclusion of concepts into Professional Military Education; and enhancing Army, Army Reserve and National Guard engagements to educate the total force.

Soldier For Life is improving access by leveraging the Army network and Centers of Influence for transitioning Soldiers and their Families, linking Veteran needs to employment, education and health resources in communities. They are advancing community relationships by bridging and bringing unity of effort to Army, government, and community efforts (local, state and federal) to support transition, and exploring public-private partnerships that will bring about efficiencies. A few examples of Soldier For Life efforts: Soldier For Life collaborates with JP Morgan Chase & Co's 100,000 Job Mission involving over 130 corporations hiring Veterans; Soldier For Life leverages the American Corporate Partners free mentorship program for Veterans; Soldier For Life is working with the Home Builders Institute that provides onsite training for Veterans looking to enter into the Home Construction Industry and assists with job placement.

Soldier For Life is also preparing Soldiers to become career-ready prior to transition through Credentialing, Certification, and Licensing (CCL) initiatives, as well as apprenticeships targeting key skilled labor positions currently in high demand across the country. Example apprenticeship programs identified by Soldier For Life include the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Commercial Drivers Licensing national training program, and the Dawson Technical Institute's Gas Utility Workers Training Program for Veterans in Chicago.

Endstate for Soldier For Life- Soldiers leave military service "career ready" and find an established network of enablers connecting them and their Families with employment, education, and healthcare required to successfully reintegrate into civilian society, and continue to serve our nation in a new capacity as Soldiers For Life.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Transition Assistant Programs (TAP)

Question 40: Does the Navy and Air Force have anything similar to the Army's Soldier for Life program?

Answer: Navy does not have a specific Sailor for Life Program, but offers many of the same services Soldier for Life offers, under the Secretary of the Navy's 21st Century Sailor & Marine Initiative and Navy's 21st Century Sailor Office.

Additionally, we utilize a Career Development Board (CDB) process as the primary delivery method to ensure all Sailors, active duty and reserve, and their families, are provided the guidance necessary to make informed career decisions based on current Navy policies, programs, and procedures, from accession to separation. We plan to incorporate a new transition assistance program, *Military Life Cycle*, into the CDB process, to ensure that Sailors are prepared for a successful Navy career as well as successful transition to civilian employment when they separate or retire.

Finally, to assist Sailors following retirement, the Navy Retired Activities Branch ensures the retired community is kept apprised of benefits, entitlements, rights and privileges; and provides customer service to over 650,000 Navy retirees; and their families, annuitants, and survivors; around the world.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Question 41: Does the Navy and Air Force have anything similar to the Army's Soldier for Life program?

Answer: The Air Force does not have an Air Force for Life program similar to the Army's Soldier for Life program. There are other resources that provide Airmen information and support. The Air Force Survivor Assistance Program provides individual service to Airmen who are seriously wounded, injured, or ill and families who have lost a loved one. Survivors of fallen Airmen are enrolled in the Air Force Families Forever (AFFF) program which serves to maintain the family's connection to the Air Force community. The DoD Military One Source program is a program that Airmen may use while serving as active, Guard or Reserve members. Other non-federal resources such as Air Force Association and Air Force Sergeants' Association provide information and support to both active duty and veteran Airmen. Airmen are also able to maintain connection with the Air Force post separation and retirement via Air Force Retirees Association and social media websites.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 42: As you know, the Pentagon unveiled plans for fully integrating women into front-line and special combat roles, including elite forces such as the Army Rangers and Navy SEALs. While Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine and Special Forces commanders detailed steps they will take, not all shared the same comfort level with regard to women in these roles, raising potential real-world scenarios that must be addressed before moving too far forward. Whether women can endure the physical and physiological rigors of sustained combat operations, and if the units are willing to accept the attrition and medical issues that go along with integration is an on-going question. Where are the services in regard to the lifting on the prohibitions on women serving in various Military Occupational Specialties, do you think attrition and medical issues are a key factor and how can we address these issues?

Answer: As part of the Army's Soldier 2020 Initiative, the Office of the Army Surgeon General (OTSG) is leading a working group studying injury and attrition rates. The working group consists of subject matter experts from within OTSG and the Medical Command, US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Public Health Command, TRADOC, Forces Command, G-1, US Army Recruiting Command, US Army Reserve Command, and the National Guard Bureau. This robust group is combing through research and available data to build a better understanding of physical and psychological injuries. Included in this is understanding the impact of proven injury prevention strategies, with a particular emphasis on Soldier health and wellness in relation to occupations with high physical demands. Upon completion, the group will provide recommendations to the Army leadership prior to the integration of women into the currently closed occupations. Using this gender neutral approach, the Army will protect Soldiers while forging the best fighting force that includes all Soldiers. Our way ahead ensures our notification to open currently closed positions, occupations or unit to women, contains all required information, undergoes a legal review, and is forwarded through Office of Secretary of Defense. The Army has established procedures to ensure we move forward only after completion of the Congressional Notification period.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 43: As you know, the Pentagon unveiled plans for fully integrating women into front-line and special combat roles, including elite forces such as the Army Rangers and Navy SEALs. While Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine and Special Forces commanders detailed steps they will take, not all shared the same comfort level with regard to women in these roles, raising potential real-world scenarios that must be addressed before moving too far forward. Whether women can endure the physical and physiological rigors of sustained combat operations, and if the units are willing to accept the attrition and medical issues that go along with integration is an on-going question. Where are the services in regard to the lifting on the prohibitions on women serving in various Military Occupational Specialties, do you think attrition and medical issues are a key factor and how can we address these issues?

Answer: Navy is committed to removing barriers that prevent service members from serving in any capacity consistent with their abilities and qualifications, and unconstrained by gender-restrictive policies. In early March 2014, we opened 267 Coastal Riverine Force small craft positions which were previously closed to women. Additionally, 37 Navy Hospital Corpsman billets in USMC Reserve units and three Navy Hospital Corpsman billets in Active Component Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies were opened to women. We continue to review positions for feasibility of opening them to women in accordance with applicable law, and guidance from the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations.

Attrition and medical issues have impacted males in direct combat positions and will very likely affect females as they integrate into direct combat roles. The impacts are mitigated whenever possible. The extent and long-term impact of medical, psychological and social factors related to females in these newly opened positions will be unknown until integration takes place. Extensive studies are currently being conducted, and others will be required for some time following integration, to adequately assess any impacts upon which to base informed follow-on recommendations.

Women have contributed in unprecedented ways to our mission over the past 13 years of war and have proven their ability to serve with distinction in an expanding number of roles. We are fully confident that they will continue to do so.

During my term as MCPON, this particular concern has never come up in conversation with our Sailors during Fleet engagements.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 44: As you know, the Pentagon unveiled plans for fully integrating women into front-line and special combat roles, including elite forces such as the Army Rangers and Navy SEALs. While Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine and Special Forces commanders detailed steps they will take, not all shared the same comfort level with regard to women in these roles, raising potential real-world scenarios that must be addressed before moving too far forward. Whether women can endure the physical and physiological rigors of sustained combat operations, and if the units are willing to accept the attrition and medical issues that go along with integration is an on-going question. Where are the services in regard to the lifting on the prohibitions on women serving in various Military Occupational Specialties, do you think attrition and medical issues are a key factor and how can we address these issues?

Answer: The Secretary of Defense has given the Services until 1 Jan 2016 to integrate combat arms Occupational Fields, Military Occupational Specialties, and units. The Marine Corps continues its deliberate, measures, and responsible approach to integrating female Marines in ground combat arms, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), and units. We will not lower standards - female Marines don't want that; they want a chance to compete. However, we will set up our female Marines for success within viable career paths in the MOSs we open.

Beginning in 2012, we assigned qualified female Marine officers and Staff Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCO) to 21 previously closed combat arms units in the assault amphibian, tank, artillery, low-altitude air defense and combat engineering fields. It is important to note that today in the Marine Corps, 40 of 42 Occupational Fields, over 90% of our Primary Military Occupational Specialties, and more than 144,000 positions are open to female Marines. Additionally, the Marine Corps has opened 463 Active Component (AC) / 220 Reserve Component (RC) billets to female Marines; 63 AC/37 RC billets to female Sailors; assigned 50 female Marines and 24 female Sailors to those billets.

The Marine Corps has also provided an opportunity for female officers to attend the Infantry Officer Course (IOC) following completion of initial officer training at The Basic School (TBS). Since the IOC class in September 2012, the Marine Corps has had 14 females volunteer, but none have successfully graduated the IOC. In 2013, we continued this infantry-specific research by providing an opportunity for enlisted female Marine volunteers to attend the Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) following graduation from Recruit Training. Since Sept 2013, 156 entered training and 33 graduated.

As we broaden our research and assessments efforts over the next 15 months, we will continue to gather data pertinent to opening more MOSs and units to female Marines. We expect that part of the data will get at some of the aspects of attrition and medical issues. Once we more fully understand these issues and their potential impact to unit readiness, we will be able to address them.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for
Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 45: As you know, the Pentagon unveiled plans for fully integrating women into front-line and special combat roles, including elite forces such as the Army Rangers and Navy SEALs. While Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine and Special Forces commanders detailed steps they will take, not all shared the same comfort level with regard to women in these roles, raising potential real-world scenarios that must be addressed before moving too far forward. Whether women can endure the physical and physiological rigors of sustained combat operations, and if the units are willing to accept the attrition and medical issues that go along with integration is an on-going question. Where are the services in regard to the lifting on the prohibitions on women serving in various Military Occupational Specialties, do you think attrition and medical issues are a key factor and how can we address these issues?

Answer: In regard to the status of lifting the prohibitions on women serving in various Military Occupational Specialties, the Air Force is undergoing a study to develop and validate occupationally-specific, operationally-relevant, gender-neutral, and science-based criterion physical fitness tests and standards for these occupational specialties per public law. I do not think attrition and medical issues are a key factor in women serving in these various occupations, as these issues affect both men and women. The goal is to have the best qualified Airmen in these occupational specialties, regardless of gender.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 46: Do you think another concern with women in combat is men taking on the "protector" gender role with women in their combat units which some may look at as disruptive?

Answer: The U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command is conducting a Gender Integration Study to examine the cultural and institutional factors affecting integration. This study takes a holistic and comprehensive approach through the collection of data from multiple surveys, site visits and focus groups. Findings from these studies will be used to inform Army leadership and assist in developing strategies for gender integration. Ultimately, it is the Army's goal to optimize force readiness by ensuring the Army is better able to select and train Soldiers -regardless of gender-- who can safely perform the physically demanding tasks of their occupation.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 47: Do you think another concern with women in combat is men taking on the "protector" gender role with women in their combat units which some may look at as disruptive?

Answer: No; we do not anticipate problems with men taking on a protector gender role within integrated combat units. Men and women are held to the same standards and expected to develop team cohesion. Women have consistently contributed in unprecedented ways, making invaluable contributions to Navy mission success over the past 13 years of combat operations. They have demonstrated their ability to serve with distinction while proving capable of serving in an expanding number of roles. Navy leadership is confident in their ability to continue doing so alongside their male counterparts.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 48: Do you think another concern with women in combat is men taking on the "protector" gender role with women in their combat units which some may look at as disruptive?

Answer: Women have been in combat for the last 12 plus years. During that time, we have not noted any specific incidences of men taking on the role of "protector" of their female Marine counterparts. Marines are professionals. We believe that as female Marines are further integrated into ground combat units, they will continue to be professional and treat all Marines in the same manner. We do not expect the integration of female Marines to closed units to be disruptive.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Bishop for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Women in Combat

Question 50: Do you think another concern with women in combat is men taking on the "protector" gender role with women in their combat units which some may look at as disruptive?

Answer: No, I do not think it is a concern that some men may take on the "protector" gender role with women in their combat units. Every Airman is a Wingman, and they protect each other, especially in combat. Airmen will always aid their fellow Airmen when in harm's way, regardless of race, gender, age, etc.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Suicides

In my district we have the Army Analytics Group and the Research Facilitation Team that have the capability to identify potential traits, both mental and physical, that could indicate a higher risk for suicide. This is accomplished by analyzing data already in the DoD databases in compliance with privacy regulations. If this kind of data analysis would be useful to you, I encourage you to work with the Army Analytics Group in Monterey so we can, hopefully, get ahead of the tragedy of military suicides.

Question 1: What are the steps each of the Services taking to reduce suicides within your ranks? Please update us on the number of suicides in your Service, and how are you identifying and seeking treatment for high-risk military personnel in the future?

Answer: The Army employs a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to reduce suicides among Soldiers. Our ongoing efforts to reduce the incidence of suicide include: partnering with the National Institute of Mental Health on the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service Members (STARRS); expanding access to behavioral health services (embedding behavioral health teams in all active brigade combat teams); helping Soldiers improve their ability to cope with and mitigate stress (relationships, separation, deployments, financial pressures, work-related issues, etc.); continuing the use of "myPRIME," a confidential online alcohol and substance abuse tool that provides risk assessment and targeted education for remotely located, i.e., Reserve Component and deployed, Soldiers; expanding the random panel for military drug testing to include commonly abused prescription medications and drugs, such as hydrocodone, hydromorphone, benzodiazepines, and synthetic cannabinoids; and expanding Family Support Programs such as Strong Bonds, Military Family Life Consultants, Total Army Sponsorship Program, and Survivor Outreach Services.

We continue to exercise an aggressive training initiative to increase awareness and understanding of prevention and intervention skills. The Army has integrated suicide awareness training across the Force, deploying Mobile Training Teams, upon command direction, to train and certify military and Army Civilian leaders and first line supervisors. To facilitate our leaders' roles in reducing the incidence of suicide, we have incorporated suicide prevention and intervention awareness training into our Commander and First Sergeant Courses. The Army continues to provide training kits and conduct training sessions at various locations to facilitate Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. We have developed specialized on-line training for our Suicide Prevention Program Managers in all three Components within the Army to enhance awareness of programs and available resources to support suicide prevention activities.

The Army National Guard and Army Reserve are funding full-time Suicide Prevention Program Manager Positions in each State, Territory, the District of Columbia, and across major commands to advise commanders and facilitate efforts to reduce risk and prevent suicides. Our Suicide Reduction Working Group provides a forum for stakeholders Army-wide to collaborate on policies, education and training, services and resources, along with ongoing initiatives that mitigate high risk behaviors and incidences of suicide.

As of March 10, 2014, the Army was tracking 38 suspected and 10 confirmed suicides for a total of 48 cases in calendar year (CY) 2014, year-to-date. Of that number, there have been 25 Active Army cases (19 suspected and six confirmed), 12 ARNG cases (11 suspected and one confirmed), and 11 USAR cases (eight suspected and three confirmed). In CY 2013, the Army had 302 cases (64 suspected and 237 confirmed) — an aggregate drop of 24 in the overall number of suicides as compared to CY 2012.

As the presence of behavioral health conditions is a key risk factor for suicides, the Medical Command's core strategy to prevent suicides is to identify, treat and manage the risk of Soldiers with Behavioral Health (BH) conditions. Within the past several years, the Army has implemented a comprehensive system of BH care that emphasizes increased access for Soldiers and improved consultation for operational leaders. The BH System of Care is based on 11 standardized clinical programs that have been developed across the Force and validated as best practices. Overall utilization of outpatient behavioral healthcare has increased from approximately 900,000 encounters in 2007 to approximately 2 million in 2013.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Suicides

In my district we have the Army Analytics Group and the Research Facilitation Team that have the capability to identify potential traits, both mental and physical, that could indicate a higher risk for suicide. This is accomplished by analyzing data already in the DoD databases in compliance with privacy regulations. If this kind of data analysis would be useful to you, I encourage you to work with the Army Analytics Group in Monterey so we can, hopefully, get ahead of the tragedy of military suicides.

Question 2: What are the steps each of the Services taking to reduce suicides within your ranks? Please update us on the number of suicides in your Service, and how are you identifying and seeking treatment for high-risk military personnel in the future?

Answer: We employ a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention to promote a sense of community, encourage open conversation about stress and foster a culture supportive of seeking help. Our policy, training and communications strategies result in development of targeted efforts to help Sailors build life skills, address the right stressors, champion leadership engagement and promote bystander intervention. We emphasize resilience in training, messaging and communications, as well as clinical practice guidelines. We instill principles of Operational Stress Control in all of our programs' efforts to help Sailors proactively navigate stress and seek resources before crises occur. We also embed mental health providers in primary care clinics and in operational units to identify and manage issues before they become problems.

Navy suicides declined from 65 in Calendar year 2012 to 47 in calendar year 2013. In the first two months of calendar year 2014 Navy has had 11 suspected suicides.

We have conducted multiple cross-functional case reviews of Navy suicides to look for patterns and lessons learned using all relevant and available data. These reviews help identify when Sailors are at higher risk and allow us to refine our suicide prevention strategies, targeting training and resources to key intervention points that can intervene before a crisis.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Suicides

In my district we have the Army Analytics Group and the Research Facilitation Team that have the capability to identify potential traits, both mental and physical, that could indicate a higher risk for suicide. This is accomplished by analyzing data already in the DoD databases in compliance with privacy regulations. If this kind of data analysis would be useful to you, I encourage you to work with the Army Analytics Group in Monterey so we can, hopefully, get ahead of the tragedy of military suicides.

Question 3: What are the steps each of the Services taking to reduce suicides within your ranks? Please update us on the number of suicides in your Service, and how are you identifying and seeking treatment for high-risk military personnel in the future?

Answer: In Calendar Year (CY) 2013, the Marine Corps had 45 confirmed and probable suicides. Of these numbers, 27 percent of the suicides involved Marines with no deployment history, 80 percent were age 30 and under, 67 percent were between the ranks of E1-E5, and 42 were male and 3 female. The number of suicides in CY2013 was a six percent decrease from previous year. In CY2014, as of 14 March 2014, we have had 11 confirmed or probable suicides. For confirmed and probable suicide attempts, there were 234 in CY2013 in the Marine Corps, which is up 27 percent from CY2012.

The Marine Corps is taking many steps to reduce suicides within our ranks as well increasing our ability to identify and offer treatment for high risk military personnel. First, the Marine Corps in January 2013 changed the Suicide Prevention and Response Program from a stand-alone program and placed it under the Community Counseling and Prevention Services Program along with Community Counseling and Combat and Operational Stress Control. Often individuals who are at risk for suicide are experiencing a range of behavioral issues and with the integration of our various programs this ensures our Marines are receiving all of the necessary services in a coordinated effort to address their behavioral health needs. Second, the Marine Corps is partnering with Navy Medicine to identify and reduce gaps in prevention and treatment. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2013 defines the full psychological health continuum of medical and non-medical care offered on Marine Corps installations to Marines, attached Sailors, and their families and establishes clear lines of communication between all entities involved in these services; and leverages and augments existing systems.

Additionally, the Marine Corps has a series of other initiatives in the area of early detection assessment, prevention, and intervention in addressing suicide in the Marine Corps. The following are several initiatives currently being implemented:

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, the Marine Corps trained over 1,000 Marine Corps and Navy attorneys, chaplains, counselors, victim advocates, and prevention specialists in the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale and safety planning, which are gold standard tools for identifying and managing suicide risk. In FY2014, additional training will be conducted across the Corps extending the ability in the field to identify suicidal ideation and intervene quickly.
- The Marine Corps Community Counseling Program on installations worldwide increases access to care and assists Marines and their families in navigating the many support resources available. Community counseling, offers short term action oriented non-medical counseling services, staffed with licensed independent practitioners who provide care for children, adolescents, adults, families, and couples. In addition, counselors coordinate care for clients and assist with the navigation between helping organizations, such as Navy Medicine.
- The Marine Corps has required reporting when a Marine has had a suicidal ideation (SI) or attempt (SA). This has enhanced data surveillance and facilitates ongoing care for At-Risk Marines following these events. In FY2013, the Marine Intercept Program (MIP) was implemented to provide case management and wrap-around services for Marines who are identified as having suicidal ideation or have attempted suicide. The MIP is designed to immediately ensure that each Marine who has reported suicidal ideation and/or attempted suicide is actively engaged in care. Community Counseling Programs' licensed counselors communicate with the command and each Marine identified through a Serious Incident Report (SIR) and/or Personnel Casualty Report (PCR) for indications that a Marine has had a suicide attempt or suicidal ideation. Care coordination and regular safety monitoring is offered to the Marine and regular communication regarding the status of the Marine is offered to the command. The Community Counseling Program staff will ensure the Marine is able to access all levels of care as needed. Care coordination and safety monitoring will continue for a minimum of 90 days post (SIR/PCR).
- In FY2013, the Marine Corps enacted new reintegration and postvention initiatives. The reintegration plan is designed to educate commands on how to successfully reintegrate their Marine back into the unit following a suicide-related event. The Commander's postvention plan provides support to unit, family, and friends following a death by suicide. This is expected to reduce stigma and signal clear intent to stay faithful with our Marines following these suicide related events.
- One ongoing initiative in the Marine Corps is the annually required suicide prevention training for all Marines via 'Never Leave a Marine Behind' training. This training is peer led by trained Marines and delivered in small separate groups for Junior Marines, SNCOs, and NCOs. Additionally, Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) is designed to capture the most high-risk personnel and to provide the skills to prevent/mitigate stress injuries.
- Every battalion or equivalent command has a command appointed Suicide Prevention Program Officer (SPPO). The SPPO billet ensures policy compliance, appropriate messaging, and acts as the "eyes and ears" of the commanding officer's Suicide Prevention Program.
- The Marine Corps DSTRESS line, with worldwide capability, provides anonymous, 24/7 counseling services to any Marine, attached Sailor, or family member to speak to 'one of their own' about everyday stress or heavier life burdens. Since inception, DSTRESS has

provided non-medical counseling services to over 19,000 Marines, attached Sailors, and family members. There have been 21 documented successfully interventions that ensured Marines received appropriate care.

- The Marine Corps has an aggressive and active research agenda that is investigating risk and protective factors of suicide and evaluation the latest evidence based approaches to assessment, prevention, and intervention.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Suicides

In my district we have the Army Analytics Group and the Research Facilitation Team that have the capability to identify potential traits, both mental and physical, that could indicate a higher risk for suicide. This is accomplished by analyzing data already in the DoD databases in compliance with privacy regulations. If this kind of data analysis would be useful to you, I encourage you to work with the Army Analytics Group in Monterey so we can, hopefully, get ahead of the tragedy of military suicides.

Question 4: What are the steps each of the Services is taking to reduce suicides within your ranks? Please update us on the number of suicides in your Service, and how are you identifying and seeking treatment for high-risk military personnel in the future?

Answer: The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program (AFSPP) is a community-based, evidence-based approach which has demonstrated a reduced suicide rate since its initiation in 1997. It is built on 11 overlapping elements that foster a Wingman culture under commander-led community action groups (Community Action Information Boards (CAIBs)). The 11 elements of the program can be grouped into three broad categories, Leadership and Community, Education, and Protections for those under investigation.

The increasing suicide rate is a national problem. While below age-adjusted civilian rates, and despite these ongoing efforts, the Air Force has also seen a gradual increase in its rates. The Air Force uses a 365-day rolling rate to adjust for fluctuations and allow for meaningful comparison. Our active duty rate as of February 28, 2014, is 16.8 per 100 thousand per year. The rate for Guard and Reserve Airmen is 16.7. In 2013, there were 49 confirmed or suspected active duty suicides; 14 Guard and 11 Reserve suicides.

The AFSPP is under constant review by the Air Force CAIB and has made regular improvements including improving public affairs guidance, memorial guidance for chaplains, improved training for commanders and front line supervisors. In cooperation with experts at the Uniformed Service Health Sciences University, the Air Force has just published a state of the art guide for clinicians — the *Air Force Guide for Suicide Risk Assessment, Management, and Treatment* — that contains specific guidance and tools for the management of high risk individuals.

The Air Force CAIB has identified three specific career groups as having a higher than expected rate of suicide historically: security forces, unmanned aircraft maintenance, and intelligence. These members receive heightened individual training, and their supervisors receive specific frontline supervisor training focused on assisting members in distress.

The Air Force constantly seeks best practices for improvement in the AFSPP, engages in research and works cooperatively with our sister Services and the recently formed Defense Suicide Prevention Office to battle this difficult national issue.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Knowing and caring for Servicemembers

Question 5: How does your Company level leadership keep accountability of your Servicemembers in regards to identifying those individuals who might need psychological treatment? Who looks out for the supervisors?

Answer: As discussed in more detailed below, the Army provides special training, called ACE (Ask, Care, and Escort) and ACE-SI (Suicide Intervention) to company-level officers and non-commissioned officers to assist them in identifying resiliency risk factors in Soldiers.

The Army trains all Soldiers (four- star to Private) to recognize potential resiliency issues and to help themselves and others seek appropriate help. Specifically, we train all leaders and Soldiers on several resiliency topics, including the following: Suicide Prevention; Substance Abuse; and Sexual Harassment and Assault. This training is tailored to each audience to help all Soldiers recognize potential issues before they fully manifest themselves and to guide them to seek appropriate help for themselves and others. There is no set protocol for intervention, as each instance is unique and usually exhibits some variance of the indicators and warnings. Depending on the indicators and warnings, leaders and experts in each field take appropriate actions to provide the care needed. Each leader and Soldier is responsible for fully understanding what resiliency resources are available. Each Soldier is also personally accountable to acknowledge potential resiliency problems and to be actively involved in solutions. Knowledge and use of available resources and personal accountability are among the critical elements of the Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign initiative.

Much of the training for all leaders and Soldiers focuses on signs/indicators of increased risk, such as: substance abuse, suicidal ideations/indicators, social maladjustment, sexual harassment and assault, domestic violence, financial issues, and legal problems. The specific training for Suicide Prevention at company level include ACE and ACE-SI training, which explicitly and deliberately target commissioned and non-commissioned leadership at company level to enable them to more effectively safeguard their Soldiers. The training addresses, in-depth, risk factors, warning signs and protective factors. ACE for Soldiers training reaches 100% of Soldiers at the company level and is an annual training requirement that addresses the risk factors and warning signs.

One issue facing our leadership is the belief that having psychological issues makes them appear weak or might affect their career. The Army is removing the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care. Programs such as Embedded Behavioral Health, Patient Centered Medical Homes and School Behavioral Health focus on reaching Soldiers and Families where they are

located to improve access and reduce any perceived stigma.

Army Medical Command initiated and standardized the Behavioral Health System of Care (BHSOC) to identify, prevent, treat and track behavioral health issues affecting Soldiers and beneficiaries. The BHSOC enhances existing behavioral health efforts by ensuring an enterprise-wide approach to the delivery of existing and emerging behavioral health programs.

The Army developed and implemented the Behavioral Health Data Portal (BHDP) to track clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction, and risk factors. The Behavioral Health Data Portal is a web-based application that collects clinical metrics at every patient encounter. It improves provider and clinical leader understanding of whether treatment is effective. DoD has recognized the Army's BHDP as a best-practice and mandated its adoption by all Services. This award winning program has the capability to determine treatment efficacy over time down to the individual provider and patient level. It has been fielded to all Army Medical Treatment Facility behavioral health clinics.

Behavioral healthcare is an important factor in the readiness of the Army. The Army Medical Command anticipates sustained growth in behavioral health care needs, even as overseas contingency operations decrease. The Army's continued emphasis on Soldiers and Families seeking help will generate an increased behavioral health workload. Increased efforts to decrease barriers to care continue to increase patient volume driving requirements for sustained behavioral health resourcing.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Knowing and caring for Servicemembers

Question 6: How does your Company level leadership keep accountability of your Servicemembers in regards to identifying those individuals who might need psychological treatment? Who looks out for the supervisors?

Answer: Navy people are our greatest asset and commanding officers are charged with the health, welfare and well-being of every Sailor, to include their psychological health. We have a long tradition of shipmates-looking-after-shipmates. In our Navy culture, we emphasize that it is a sign of strength to ask for help as much as it to provide it. All Sailors are trained to ACT (Ask-Care-Treat) when they know of a shipmate in distress. Once a Sailor is identified as needing help, leaders are responsible for facilitating access to the appropriate level of care, monitoring the Sailor's progress throughout the process, within the applicable DoD guidelines to ensure confidentiality, and then reintegrating the Sailor at the appropriate level.

A recently-established Deployed Resiliency Counselor (DRC) program assigns credentialed clinical counselors to aircraft carriers and large-deck amphibious assault ships to provide short-term individual therapy and psycho-educational training on Sailor resiliency topics — such as, suicide prevention, substance abuse and the prevention of sexual assault — when the ship to which they are assigned is deployed, and to hold shipboard office hours in homeport.

Supervisors are Sailors first, and are as vulnerable to potential life and operational stressors as every other Sailor. Within our wardrooms and chief petty officer/petty officer messes peers look out for peers, ACT when appropriate, and ensure commanders are kept informed.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Knowing and caring for Service members

Question 7: How does your Company level leadership keep accountability of your Service members in regards to identifying those individuals who might need psychological treatment? Who looks out for the supervisors?

Answer: Leadership practices at the company level are unique due to many environmental factors. Some of the tools available are the Force Preservation Councils (FPC), Periodic Health Assessments, and engaged leadership through mentorship and routine counseling by leaders. This applies at all levels of command and includes those in supervisory positions. FPCs are a stable sounding board and resource for leaders to develop actionable, executable plans to assist At-Risk Marines (ARMs) and ensure every Marine has access to resources he/she needs. FPCs provide commanders a better capability to provide concerned, informed, involved, collaborative leadership in support of individual leaders and their Marines to identify and provide support to at-risk Marines.

Supervisors have a responsibility to practice the same help-seeking behaviors that they encourage among junior Marines. Most factors that place Marines at risk for stress injury impact all ranks. Some of our training to identify at-risk Marines is specific to level of career development. We ask that Marines remain vigilant for any signs that a fellow Marine may be in need of help, regardless of rank, and to take action when signs are noted.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Knowing and Caring for Servicemembers

Question 8: How does your Company level leadership keep accountability of your Servicemembers in regards to identifying those individuals who might need psychological treatment? Who looks out for the supervisors?

Answer: In essence, all Airmen are expected to look out for each other, regardless of rank or position.

Supervisory personnel, including commanders, may encourage Air Force members to voluntarily seek mental health care. In limited circumstances and under strict procedural guidance, commanders with delegated Uniformed Code of Military Justice authority can also order uniformed members within their chain of command to meet with health care providers and be evaluated. Supervisors, chiefs and first sergeants as well as advice from local health care providers help a commander determine how best to help their Airmen through their crisis.

To support all Airmen to include supervisors, Comprehensive Airmen Fitness (CAF) is taught to all Airmen and is a holistic approach to inject resilience characteristics into our total force. CAF enables Airmen to learn resilient skills, thus when facing challenges, either positive or negative, the learned skills may help an Airman cope and overcome life events.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Foreign Language Proficiency

The military has made enormous strides in the areas of language proficiencies and cultural awareness over the past decade. With the President's National Security strategy, the Army is moving towards regionally aligned forces that requires increased cooperation and communication with foreign militaries and populations.

Question 9: How does your service plan on accomplishing the Regionally Aligned Forces Concept in regards to language capabilities?

Answer: The new Army Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Strategy plans to expand upon already existing pre-deployment training requirements for foreign language and culture. The current guidelines only apply to Southwest Asia, but the new strategy will make this a requirement for all deploying Soldiers. Every Soldier will be required to complete a program called Rapport, which includes training in both foreign language and culture. Additionally, one Soldier per platoon-size unit will be required to complete a more extensive training program called Headstart II, which includes more in-depth training in both foreign language and culture. Both of these training programs are available through Distance Learning via the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, CA. More extensive language and culture training can be programmed through existing Language Training Detachments.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Foreign Language Proficiencies

Question 10: Does your service plan on increasing your language capability to meet the President's National Security strategy- Pivot to the Pacific Theater?

Answer: The Army will expand language capability in line with Regionally Aligned Force policy and associated Geographic Combatant Commanders' requirements for foreign language and culture training, which includes the Pacific theater.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Foreign Language Proficiencies

Question 11: Does your service plan on increasing your language capability to meet the President's National Security strategy- Pivot to the Pacific Theater?

Answer: Navy remains committed to making the investments needed to provide the optimal balance of Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) skills to our operational forces, as our success depends in large part on our ability to communicate with potential adversaries, enduring allies, and emerging partner nations. For example, we continue to incentivize verified Chinese-Mandarin and Indonesian proficiencies for all Sailors, regardless of career field, through the Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) Program. Navy also is placing added emphasis on heightening language skill levels in our career linguist communities (enlisted Cryptologic Language Analysts and Foreign Area Officers) by investing in additional language sustainment and enhancement training. Navy routinely assesses its language requirements, and modifies policy and incentives to generate the required capability and capacity.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Foreign Language Proficiencies

Question 12: Does your service plan on increasing your language capability to meet the President's National Security strategy- Pivot to the Pacific Theater?

Answer: Yes. Language proficiency provides a vital capability to expeditionary operations, especially in an area with as much linguistic diversity as the Pacific Theater. The Marine Corps is meeting this challenge through programs for the General Purpose Force and for specialized communities within the Marine Corps.

The Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization (RCLF) program provides language familiarization training to all Sergeants and above and all officers as a required component of Professional Military Education. 27% of RCLF participants are assigned to language, regional, and culture studies relevant to the Pacific Theater, and are required to complete 80 hours of language training as part of the program. The language portion utilizes the HeadStart2 program developed by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

A related effort, the Marine Corps' International Affairs Program, provides regionally-trained and experienced Marines for assignment to key billets. Our Foreign Area Officers (FAO) and Foreign Area Staff Non-commissioned Officers (FAS) must demonstrate language proficiency to be qualified to fill these specific billets. Over the last three years, 52% of the Marines selected for FAO training have been assigned to Asia-Pacific languages and regional studies. The pilot program for FAS has two of its nine Marines with an Asia-Pacific focus.

The Marine Corps cryptologic linguist workforce currently has 23% of its personnel assigned to duties involving Chinese-Mandarin, Indonesian, Korean, Tagalog, and Thai, as well as lower density Asian languages. The majority of their language training occurs at DLIFLC. This percentage will increase to 28% in 2016, while the overall workforce size will remain stable. This increase will better posture the Marine Corps for its intelligence missions in the Pacific Theater.

Finally, Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) is training operators with a Pacific focus. Primary languages are Indonesian and Tagalog, and starting in October 2014, 40 MARSOC Critical Skills Operators per year will train in one of these languages. This training occurs at Camp Lejeune, NC, utilizing DLIFLC instructor staff.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Foreign Language Proficiencies

Question 13: Does your service plan on increasing your language capability to meet the President's National Security strategy- Pivot to the Pacific Theater?

Answer: The Air Force develops and sustains Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC)-capable Total Force Airmen in accordance with applicable guidance. As changing priorities drive the demand for LREC capabilities, the Air Force will meet those demands based on validated requirements. Regional combatant commands and major commands request requirements for billets, and provision of LREC training is based on these validated requirements. While there has not been a dramatic increase in billets, the Air Force is prepared to increase our language capacity in response to anticipated increases in requirements. Additionally, we will leverage existing resources such as the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, the Air Force Special Operations School, and the Air Force Culture and Language Center to build a corps of LREC-capable Airmen to support missions in the Asia- Pacific Theater and elsewhere in the world.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III follows:]

Sexual Assault

Question 14: With the continued negative scrutiny that the services are receiving in regards to sexual assaults how are you addressing this serious issue within your ranks? How will the negative attention that the services are getting affect the recruitment of qualified personnel?

Answer: The Army continues to take the issue of sexual assault extremely seriously. The Army executes its Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Program (SHARP) through the following lines of effort (LOE): Prevention, Investigation, Accountability, Advocacy and Assessment. Through the Prevention LOE, the Army executes its "I. A.M. Strong" campaign, where every member of the Army team is taught to "Intervene, Act and Motivate" others to do the same in order to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, and the behaviors that lead to such incidents. Further, over the last year, the Army has instituted several new programs and policies aimed at preventing and effectively responding to sexual assault. These include: enhanced screening of Soldiers in positions of significant trust and responsibility (Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs), Victim Advocates, drill sergeants, recruiters, and Advanced Individual Training [AIT] platoon sergeants); and mandating that all officer and non-commissioned officer evaluation reports address how the rated Soldier supported the SHARP program and responded to allegations of sexual assault in his unit.

The Army has significantly increased its awareness initiatives to ensure Soldiers, DA Civilians and Army Family Members understand that prevention of sexual assault and harassment is the Army's top priority and that everyone has a role in contributing to a positive command climate where sexual assault is rare, but if it does occur, victims feel free to report without fear of reprisal. The SHARP Program Office developed new marketing materials that focus on restoring the trust in the people and processes associated with SHARP. The new materials, which support the SHARP Program's "I. A.M. Strong" Campaign Phase III: Achieve Cultural Change," emphasize the importance of victims to report (Speak Up!) and the responsibilities of fellow Soldiers and Leaders (military and civilian) to do more than just listen and to take action to prevent and/or respond to inappropriate behaviors and sexual assaults. The materials are designed to facilitate cultural change.

Additionally, the SHARP Program Office has increased its efforts to communicate SHARP programmatic changes and initiatives in partnership with the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPA), the Defense Media Activity (DMA) and HQDA and field staff. Through these efforts, SHARP has ensured the increase in positive coverage of initiatives such as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, SHARP Summit, and Army progress in achieving Congressional and DOD milestones such as enhancement of the Special Victim Prosecutors program, the Special Victim

Counsel Program, Joint Base Lewis-McChord's Sexual Assault Response Team and the Chaplain's Program

The SHARP Program developed a series of short and impactful vignettes in support of its communication efforts. The videos reinforce key messages such as Command Support, Victim Trust, Investigative Techniques, Special Victim Counsel, and Male Victimization, among others. These efforts leverage the communicative value of visual imagery and scenario-based messaging to convey the Army's culture of mutual respect, trust, professionalism and the role of leadership in creating an environment where sexual harassment/sexual assault are not tolerated. The SHARP Program Office, in coordination with OCPA and DMA, has created a higher-profile external facing presence on Army.mil, and increased its presence of SHARP information on DOD.mil's Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention page.

Finally, a cursory review of recruiting data reveals no discernible impact to recruiting of non-prior service (NPS) females due to any negative scrutiny that the services may be receiving regarding sexual assault. Upon reviewing the Army's monthly recruiting data for NPS enlisted Soldiers from FY12 to present, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of female Soldiers recruited each year. In FY12, 15% of all NPS recruits were female. In FY13, 16% of all NPS recruits were female. To date, 17% of all NPS recruits for this fiscal year are female. Total number of females recruited in FY14 is expected to be lower than FY13, however, due to a lower overall recruiting mission for the year (57,000 versus 69,000).

The Army believes that by disseminating factual information about the Army's efforts to reduce, with the goal of eradicating, sexual assault, potential recruits and their family members will view the Army as the premier U.S. Military service where they can achieve their full potential while serving their Nation.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens follows:]

Sexual Assault

Question 15: With the continued negative scrutiny that the services are receiving in regards to sexual assaults how are you addressing this serious issue within your ranks? How will the negative attention that the services are getting affect the recruitment of qualified personnel?

Answer: Understanding the realities of sexual assault and the conditions under which it occurs is a primary, continuous activity. Prevention initiatives continue using a multi-faceted approach focusing on command climate; deterrence; and bystander intervention. Navy commanders are charged with fostering an environment in which behaviors and actions that may lead to sexual assault, as well as sexual assault itself, are not tolerated, condoned or ignored. To improve command climate, we have taken the following actions:

- The 21st Century Sailor Office was established on the Chief of Naval Operations staff and its director was named as Navy's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Officer to direct implementation of Navy-wide SAPR efforts.
- Prospective Commanding Officer/Senior Enlisted Academy SAPR course curriculum reflects the most current training requirements.
- A comprehensive, audience-focused SAPR training curriculum exists at every Navy entry point (Recruit Training Command, U.S. Naval Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Candidate School).
- Sixteen SAPR billets, in the grade of O-4 or above, were recently established at our most senior commands to improve program oversight, and another nine billets will be filled in fiscal year 2014.
- Command climate surveys are conducted within 90 days of assuming command, and annually thereafter; results are reviewed by each unit's Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) and briefed to members of the unit.
- The Department of the Navy developed and presented mandatory SAPR training for all civilian employees entitled "Sexual Assault Prevention: One Team, One Fight." Training addresses bystander intervention, reporting options and resources for civilian employees, and the impact of sexual assault on victims, commands and mission accomplishment. This complemented, for civilians, SAPR — Fleet and SAPR — Leadership training that was delivered to the active duty and Reserve force.

To deter sexual assault, we have identified and implemented regional best practices throughout the Navy to include:

- An alcohol de-glamorization campaign was intensified, and Alcohol Detection Devices are used to discourage alcohol abuse.

- Roving barracks patrols increase the visible presence of leadership in order to deter behavior that may lead to sexual assault or other misconduct.
- In our barracks, indoctrination training requirements have been modified to improve safety of barracks for residents and Resident Advisor (E-6 and above) training is mandatory.
- Facilities are surveyed to identify areas that require better lighting, visibility, or other safety improvements to reduce the vulnerability of Sailors.

Bystander Intervention is another key element of our prevention efforts. Specifically,

- All Training Support Center/"A" schools deliver Bystander Intervention training to post-recruit training Sailors.
- SAPR-Fleet Training is completed during recruit training.
- The Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions provides peer-to-peer mentoring and SAPR strategic messaging.
- Fleet Workshops and Personnel Readiness Summits are delivered to fleet concentration areas; programs incorporate Bystander Intervention training and innovative sexual assault training (e.g., *Sex Signals, No Zebras*).

To provide immediate, continued care and support to victims, Navy has several programs and initiatives. For victim advocacy Navy has the following programs:

Sexual Assault Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) serve as single points-of-contact to coordinate sexual assault response when a sexual assault is reported. Victim Advocates facilitate care and provide referrals and non-clinical support and advocacy to victims. Navy has 66 civilian and five active duty SARCs, 67 civilian VAs, and over 4,400 SAPR Unit VAs (uniformed, collateral duty).

A recently-established Deployed Resiliency Counselor (DRC) program assigns credentialed clinical counselors to aircraft carriers and large-deck amphibious assault ships to provide short-term individual therapy and psycho-educational training on Sailor resiliency topics — such as, suicide prevention, substance abuse and the prevention of sexual assault — when the ship to which they are assigned is deployed, and to hold shipboard office hours in homeport.

Navy has implemented a Victims Legal Counsel (VLC) program and has dedicated 30 Judge Advocates (29 VLC and one Chief of Staff) with military justice experience to provide legal support for eligible victims of sexual assault. The primary mission of the VLC Program is to provide legal counsel and, as appropriate, advocacy for victims. Navy VLC help protect victims' rights through the investigative and adjudicative stages of the military justice system. VLC also complement the care and support victims receive from SARCs and VAs. VLC duties include explaining the investigative and military justice processes; advocating the victim's rights and interests; and, when appropriate, appearing in court on the victim's behalf.

Current accession data does not reflect any significant negative impact on Navy Recruiting's ability to recruit (or continue to recruit) highly qualified men and women into the Navy. Anecdotally, Navy recruiters are not reporting any increased negative fallout from recruiting prospects, family members, or recruiting centers of influence. Additionally, a recent study from the DoD Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies (JAMRS) reflected a positive trend as

reflected in the table below. During the January 2014 poll, 70 percent of adults surveyed reported that someone serving in the military is *equally likely or less likely than* someone not serving in the military to experience sexual assault. The proportion of those reporting that sexual assault is *more likely* decreased in the January 2014 survey from July 2013, the high point for available data.

Total	Oct 2012	Jul 2013	Jan 2014
More Likely	13%	24% [↑]	19% [↓]
Equally Likely	54%	47% [↓]	44%
Less Likely	24%	20%	26% [↑]
Don't know/Refused	9%	9%	11%

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett follows:]

Sexual Assault

Question 16: With the continued negative scrutiny that the services are receiving in regards to sexual assaults how are you addressing this serious issue within your ranks? How will the negative attention that the services are getting affect the recruitment of qualified personnel?

Answer: All Marine Corps leaders, beginning with the Commandant, are personally engaged in eliminating sexual assault from the ranks. To continue our tradition as America's crisis response force, we must maintain our high standards of discipline. Our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) initiatives have taken a holistic approach, designed to reinforce the Corps' sense of tradition and ethics that would not only eliminate serious crimes like sexual assault, but other damaging behaviors, such as sexual harassment, hazing, and the misuse of alcohol. This conduct not only weakens our ability to perform our roles and missions, it damages the health and welfare of our most precious resource: the brave young men and women who volunteer to serve this country. The Commandant's SAPR Campaign Plan continues to guide the implementation of large-scale initiatives that affect Marines on an individual level and emphasize the values and traditions that have made the Marine Corps the finest expeditionary force in history. We have not had any indications that our recruitment efforts have been affected by the exhaustive efforts of the military services to combat sexual assault within the ranks.

[Questions for the Record submitted by Congressman Farr for Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody follows:]

Sexual Assault

Question 17: With the continued negative scrutiny that the services are receiving in regards to sexual assaults how are you addressing this serious issue within your ranks? How will the negative attention that the services are getting affect the recruitment of qualified personnel?

Answer: The Air Force has maintained its strong recruiting performance of qualified personnel for the Air Force. The Air Force continues to enlist historically high percentages of high-quality recruits that are high school graduates qualified with scores of 50-100 out of 100 (top half) on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT). While Department of Defense benchmarks for these attributes are 90 percent and 60 percent, respectively, the Air Force exceeded these targets in fiscal year 2013 by recruiting 99 percent of high school diploma graduates and 98 percent in top-half AFQT scores.